

The Times Literary Supplement

January 27 1984 Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX

TLS

Subscriptions

The *TLS* is read in over eighty countries throughout the world. A large proportion of our readers find that the surest and most convenient way to get the *TLS* each week is to take out a subscription. Our subscription service provides readers quickly and regularly with their weekly copy of the paper, which offers an incomparable and up to date guide to books published all over the world.

Simply complete the coupon below and send it together with your cheque to the address shown.

The following postal zones are listed for your convenience. If your country is not included, please contact your local postal authority to ascertain your correct zone as specified by the British Post Office.

United Kingdom Only by surface mail.
6 months (26 issues) £15.00. 12 months (52 issues) £30.00
British Postal Zone 'A' including Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.
6 months (26 issues) £26.26. 12 months (52 issues) £52.52
British Postal Zone 'B' including Argentina, Bermuda, Brazil, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
6 months (26 issues) £29.12. 12 months (52 issues) £58.24
British Postal Zone 'C' including Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Taiwan.
6 months (26 issues) £31.72. 12 months (52 issues) £63.44
Europe including Cyprus, Gibraltar, Malta.
6 months (26 issues) £23.66. 12 months (52 issues) £47.32
USA and Canada by air.
6 months (26 issues) US\$35.00. 12 months (52 issues) US\$70.00.

Please send me *The Times Literary Supplement*

☐ 6 months ☐ 12 months

NAME _____ PLEASE PRINT

ADDRESS _____

I enclose my cheque for _____ payable to Times Newspapers Ltd

Signature _____ Date _____

Return this coupon to Times Newspapers Ltd, Subscription Subscriptions Manager, Oakfield House, 35 Percy Street, London W1P 8JH.

Contents

AESTHETICS 77, ANCIENT HISTORY 88, BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS 78, 91, CHILDREN'S BOOKS 94, ECONOMICS 79, EASTERN EUROPE 90, ENGLISH LITERATURE 91, FICTION 93, HISTORY 75, IRISH LITERATURE 81, MEDIEVAL HISTORY 87, MODERN HISTORY 92, PHILOSOPHY 83, POETRY 76, SCIENCE 82, SOCIAL STUDIES 89

ALAN RYAN	Stefan Collini, Donald Winch and John Burrow: <i>The Noble Science of Politics</i> - A study in nineteenth-century intellectual history 75
BLAKE MORRISON	Michael Holman: <i>Nights in the Iron Hotel</i> 76
STEVEN MEDCALF	Geoffrey Hill: <i>The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Péguy</i> 76
IAN MCGILCHRIST	Lewis Hyde: <i>The Gift - Imagination and the erotic life of property</i> 77
JULIAN SYMONS	Diane Johnson: <i>Dashell Hammett - A life</i> 78
ERIC ROLL	Roy Jenkins (Editor): <i>Britain and the EEC</i> 78
PETER OPPENHEIMER	Ali M. El-Agraa (Editor): <i>Britain Within The European Community</i> 78
V. BULMER-THOMAS	M. S. Davidi and M. S. Dajani: <i>Economic Sanctions - Ideals and experience</i> 79
ERIK DE MAUNY	Laird W. Berglund: <i>Coffee and the Growth of Agrarian Capitalism in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico</i> 79
VIRGINIA MOIR	Georgi Markov: <i>The Truth That Killed</i> 80
OBORGESCHÖFFLIN	Ion Creangă: <i>Memoirs of My Boyhood and Stories and Tales</i> 80
DAVID LEHMAN	Ferenc Fehér and Agnes Heller: <i>Hungary 1956 Revisited</i> 80
PATRICIA CRAIG	Perpetual Motion (poem) 80
EDWARD ABRAHAM	Patricia A. McFate (Editor): <i>Uncollected Prose of James Stephens</i> 81
J. BRUCE BRACKENRIDGE	Ragnar Sohlman: <i>The Legacy of Alfred Nobel</i> 81
MICHAEL SLOTE	Peter Wilhelm: <i>The Nobel Prize</i> 82
PEREGRINE HORDEN	R. Aris, H. T. Davis and R. H. Stuewer (Editors): <i>Springs of Scientific Creativity - Essays on founders of modern science</i> 82
ROBERT HEWISON	Susan Hampshire: <i>Morality and Conflict</i> 83
LUCY ELLMANN	Alan Montefiore (Editor): <i>Philosophy in France Today</i> 83
PETER KEMP	Behind the lines 84
RICHARD COMBS	Among this week's contributors 84
R. S. SHORT	Letters on 'Testing the Chains', Learned Journals, The Texts of King Lear', etc 85
RICHARD FINDLATER	Commentary
T. P. WISEMAN	<i>The Omega Workshops, 1913-1919: Decorative arts of Bloomsbury</i> (Crafts Council)
E. E. RICE	<i>The Omega Workshops: Alliance and Enmity in English Art, 1911-1920</i> (Anthony d'Offay)
KENNETH KITCHEN	Judith Collins: <i>The Omega Workshops</i> 86
MAUREEN CAIN	<i>Cabin'd, Cribb'd, Confin'd</i> (Radio 3) and <i>Bookmark</i> (BBC2) 86
SEÁN MCCONVILLE	<i>The Moon in the Gutter</i> (Lancaster Cinema) 86
GRAHAM BRADSHAW	Luis Buñuel: <i>My Last Breath</i> 87
LACHLAN MACKINNON	Giles Playfair: <i>The Flash of Lightning - A portrait of Edmund Keat</i> 87
PIERS ORAY	Andrew Wallace-Hadrill: <i>Suetonius - The Scholar and his Career</i> 88
PETER GAY	Naphtali Lewis: <i>Life in Egypt under Roman Rule</i> 88
S. S. FRAWER	B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A. B. Lloyd: <i>Ancient Egypt - A social history</i> 88
D. C. WATT	William J. Mumme: <i>The Penguin Guide to Ancient Egypt</i> 88
A. J. SHERMAN	Simon Holdaway: <i>Inside the British Police - A force at work</i> 89
J. K. L. WALKER	David McNeel: <i>McNeel's Law</i> 89
JOY GRANT	Dermot Walsh and Adrian Poole (Editors): <i>A Dictionary of Criminology</i> 89
LINDA TAYLOR	Stephen Booth: <i>King Lear, Macbeth, Iphigénie, and Tragedy</i> 90
LINDSAY DUGUID	Paul Hamilton: <i>Coleridge's Poetics</i> 90
T. J. BINYON	Eloise Knapp Hay: <i>T. S. Eliot's Negative Way</i> 90
OSWYN MURRAY	Richard Wagner: <i>My Life</i> 91
TANYA HARROD	Joachim Masch: <i>Klein - A biography</i> 91
CAROL RUMENS	John H. Becker: <i>Winds of History - The German years of Lucius Dobbins Clay</i> 92
GBORGESZIRTES	William R. Perl: <i>Operation Action - Rescue from the Holocaust</i> 92
Cover picture	Judith Martin: <i>Gilbert - A comedy of manners</i> 93
	Teresa Waugh: <i>Publizing Water</i> 93
	Patricia Wendor: <i>Leo Days</i> 93
	M. P. K. Fisher: <i>Not Now But Now</i> 93
	Criminal proceedings 93
	Kenneth McLellan: <i>Children of the Gods</i> 94
	Deborah Apy: <i>Beauty and the Beast</i> 94
	Kenneth Graham: <i>The Reluctant Dragon</i> 94
	Adele Geras: <i>Voyage</i> 94
	Dennis Lee: <i>Jolly Belly</i> 94
	Paperback in brief 95
	Index of books reviewed 95

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 188

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow, and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than February 17. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers received on that date, or failing that, the most nearly correct. Entries, marked 'Author, Author 188', on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX.

1. We spent Christmas at Boston. It was deep in snow, and everything we touched gave us an electric shock. Flashes, blue and red, sprang from keys when keys were put into them. David, touching Oberon's forehead to show him where he had a brain, repeated (and communicated) with a shock that his left arm was useless for the rest of the day, and

Oberon gave a piercing howl. I touched nothing excepting through the medium of a glove.

2. It was a quiet, sultry summer, the summer they called the Rosenbergs, and I didn't know what I was doing in New York. I'm stupid, about executions. . . . It had nothing to do with me, but I couldn't help wondering what it would be like, being burned alive all along your nerves.

Competition No 155

Winner: Patrick M. Ball.

Answers:

All by Lord Byron.

1. Letter to Thomas Moore, November 30, 1816.

2. Letter to John Murray, July 22, 1816.

3. Letter to Thomas Moore, January 2, 1821.

Alan Ryan

STEFAN COLLINI, DONALD WINCH and JOHN BURROW

The Noble Science of Politics: A study in nineteenth-century intellectual history 385pp. Cambridge University Press. £25 (paperback, £9.95).

0521 25762 X

Regarded strictly as a book upon its ostensible subject-matter, *The Noble Science of Politics* is not entirely satisfactory - it is blitty and stylistically uneven, the degree of seriousness which the various topics under discussion either warrant or receive is too variable for comfort, and the degree of conviction which the authors inspire varies wildly from one topic to another.

But it is a tremendously good read, and as a stimulus to thought it is so much more than satisfactory that it could hardly be bettered. If some of the stylistic unevenness is irritating - the sheer noisiness of Stefan Collini's chapter on Mill draws much of the argument - some of it is not merely inevitable but apt. So different in style, ambition and doctrine were, say, Dugald Stewart on the one hand and Walter Bagehot on the other that any book which tackles both of them may as well be written by more than one author - and all the more so when we have Donald Winch to look after the one and John Burrow to look after the other; and Dr Collini's briskness, too, is exceedingly welcome when it is applied to brightening up the stodginess of Cliffe Leslie, Seeley, and Ashley, and teasing the relentless middle-of-the-roadism of Sidgwick's politics textbooks.

As this may suggest, *The Noble Science of Politics* ranges widely. A quick summary of its contents will suggest both that range and the propagandist purpose behind the book as a whole. The Prologue issues a manifesto in the Cambridge manner. Anyone who wishes to impose a pattern on the development of 'political science' which was invisible to those who took part in that development is told off for anachronism-mongering. Misguided people who think that any interesting history of ideas moves from intellectual summit to intellectual summit, from Jeremy Bentham to John Stuart Mill to - well, to nobody in particular, but perhaps to Green or Hobhouse or Wallis at a pinch - are rebuffed for failing to see what a great variety of things quite properly counted as 'political science' in the nineteenth century.

To enforce this point, we begin with the impact of Dugald Stewart on the Edinburgh Review, make our way through the effect on Whig opinion of Millard's embracing the wrong side in the struggle over the Corn Laws, and are shown some of the ways in which Whigs like Macaulay did not differ from Philosophic Radicals like James Mill. J. S. Mill's failure to discover the principles of 'anthology' which were to ground a truly philosophic political science takes us on to the intellectual uplands for a chapter, and an elegant account of Bagehot aptly makes the point that in politics style may be the same thing as content.

Thereafter grittier topics carry us to the end of the book - Stubbs, Freeman and Bryce on the lessons to be drawn from history, especially by a 'judicious' use of 'the comparative method'; Sidgwick's solemn employment of 'the method of reflective analysis' to end up after 600 pages where the unreflective and unanalytical member of the educated middle class had begun in the first place, and Marshall's rather desperate attempt to work out where in the general scheme of social science economics in particular fitted in. In a dying fall, we are offered a tour of the 'political science' syllabus at Cambridge from the establishment of the Moral Sciences Tripos in 1851 to 1910 or so - an exercise which has on the effect of making me wonder how man like Sidgwick or Oscar Browning or Lewis Dickinson had the nerve to simulate to teach a range of topics which would nowadays be parcelled out among half-a-dozen area specialists. An epilogue points out that nineteenth-century conceptions of political science look pretty quaint today, it's not because 'political science' has become a brown subject suitable to stare nuclear physics in the eye.

Intellectual history conceived as the authors of this book conceive it is essentially opposed to the drawing of morals. Collini, Burrow and

Winch seem to suppose that they are surrounded by historians eager to grade their predecessors for the importance of their contributions to political science as now practised, and thus they aim above everything else to give us a more concrete sense of what people like Macaulay, Ricardo, James Mill and the rest thought they were doing at the time they were doing it. This Ranke-like stress on how it really was is sometimes elevated to the methodological rule that we aren't ever allowed to employ hindsight to explain what people were up to, and then it is narrowing and unpersuasive. But done tactfully the attempt to re-create an intellectual milieu and style, and to show just what one's chosen subjects were up to can be extremely enlightening. And it's not as though no large points at all are made.

One which is very well worth recalling is that almost all the writers discussed here were

lines get equally fogged. Macaulay, who denounced Mill's *Essay on Government* as the work of a fifteenth-century Schoolman born out of due season, and complained that its author seemed not to know that governments had anywhere existed among men, was entirely happy with Mill's *History of British India*, which is by no means a work of 'inductive' history such as Macaulay's attack on Mill proposes as the basis of political science.

Moreover, Mill and Macaulay reversed positions as soon as they got away from the immediate present. Mill saw the past as a record of gradual emancipation from folly and superstition. He regarded immediate and dramatic political change as quite unproblematic, given the enlightened state of the urban middle classes; but, so far as the remote future went, the fact was that, as his son observed, he thought human life a pretty poor thing at best, and had



Cruikshank's 'The peril of changing the British constitution', 1819, reproduced from Graphic Works of George Cruikshank (168pp. Constable. £5.0 486 23438 X).

ambitious for the subject and confident that real progress could be made in our understanding of politics. If the history of the social sciences sometimes looks like a long-drawn-out and rather bad joke - a constant scurrying about to locate the 'Newton of the human sciences' who cometh not - the late eighteenth century none the less thought that the experimental method which had triumphed in the physical world with Newton could reasonably be expected to triumph in the social.

Hume, now thought of as the great sceptic, wrote an essay to show that politics could be reduced to a science with the reliability of mathematics, and even - if somewhat tongue-in-cheek - wrote a design for a perfect commonwealth. Dugald Stewart had no easy time lecturing on the science of rational legislation; his principles may have derived via Smith from the Tory Hume, but Tory Edinburgh in the aftermath of the French Revolution looked with intense suspicion on all suggestions for the application of intelligence to social and political institutions, even when Stewart followed Smith in insisting that the mark of the modern legislator was his awareness of the delicacy of the social mechanism and his unwillingness to engage in the brutal reconstruction which distinguished the legislator in classical republicanism (tinged by Machiavelli's *Discorsi* - a topic theory and in Machiavelli's *Discorsi* - a topic which is elegantly handled both here and in Albert Hirschmann's *The Passions and the Interests*).

Still, as Winch says, there's more to Stewart than that, and his willingness to speculate about the perfectibility of mankind sets him apart from Hume and Smith and takes him into some of the most cross-channel company. This is a doubtful cross-channel company. This is a doubtful point worth hanging on to when one is tempted to adopt the world-view of the Mill family; in which the *Edinburgh Review* stands for a wishy-washy reformism hardly better than outworn conservatism - and tempted therefore to forget that James Mill was as devoted to right-wing conservatism as Jeffrey, and that Stewart was as energetic a proponent of Useful Knowledge as Bentham.

As the lines of political division and social aspiration between Whigs and Philosophic Radicals became blurred, the methodological

no grand vision of a twentieth-century Britain in which science, industry and commerce had conspired to bring 'the common man' to altogether new degrees of happiness.

Macaulay, in contrast, thought drastic change was fraught with danger, had a Burkean admiration for the way the heroes of the past had created the British constitution, and thought the middle rank of society - whose virtues he reckoned in just the same terms as Mill - was altogether too thin on the ground to exercise the untrodden leadership which James Mill expected of it. But, as to the distant future, his hopes were boundless; the land of Cockayne might be built in Britain, as industry and commerce leapt ahead. He was at once more frightened of the plain man as he was and more cheerful about what the plain man might become than either James or John Stuart Mill.

The relationship between 'inductive history' and political wisdom was a constant preoccupation of nineteenth-century students of politics. John Stuart Mill, it is true, emphasized the need for a new science of 'etiology' - the scientific study of the way people became socialized into their beliefs and allegiances - as the basis of a new and more adequate political science, but the raw materials of that new science could only be provided by history, and the only tests of its maxims when they should be discovered would be provided by history. Although he never made much headway with the subject, it is plain that Mill's confidence in the possibility of developing an appropriate political psychology was increased by Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, which was all the more methodologically compelling for being so unselfconscious about its own intellectual techniques.

Less obviously 'philosophical' figures than Mill shared his anxiety to bolt science on to history in order to create a new political science. Bagehot almost employs the term 'philosopher' as a term of abuse - commonly when he is explaining why some doctrine of Mill's won't quite do, or when he is complaining that a man of Mill's *gravitas* ought to be less flighty about the basis of political representation. And, as Burrow makes clear, Bagehot's most obvious talent is his sense of the nuances of behaviour which set the successful politician

apart from the failure. Yet, as Burrow also points out, there is Bagehot in *Physics and Politics* trying to explain in evolutionary terms why it is that societies now need order, and now variety and change. *Physics and Politics* is an odd book, and unlike almost everything else of Bagehot's it is rather dull and rather awkwardly written; none the less, it is written with wholly understandable anxieties in mind, and in a framework which was shared with Mill and Maine.

That is, once 'the cake of custom' has crumbled, and the 'Age of Discussion' is launched, the great fear is that ill-conceived efforts at ameliorating the lot of the poor will lead to a new era of stagnation. The discovery that the plain man is deeply conservative, even if he is also a socialist, was not one which waited upon twentieth-century political sociologists, and Bagehot was as fearful as many liberals have always been of what might happen under the unfettered rule of the majority.

Still, as Burrow says, this isn't the dominant mood; what we rightly remember Bagehot for is the cheerful acceptance of the diversity of political types, the rather knowing and condescending distinction between the 'dignified' and the 'efficient' elements of the constitution, the deft and tongue-in-cheek defence of 'Dull Government'. The character emerges by reflection on what it is not; not philosophical, not reverential in the Burkean fashion, not - so far as politics goes - disposed to wishfulness or utopianism. And not, above all, academic.

Whether it was an unmitigated disaster for political science to fall into the hands of professors is an open question; it would certainly be an unmitigated disaster for historians of the subject who were less sprightly than Burrow and Collini. Freeman on comparative government can never have been light reading; a hundred years later, it takes some stamina to tackle him at all, let alone in the company of Bryce and Seeley. But, of course, even if we cannot draw easy or simple morals from the attempt to apply the lessons of the village community or Tacitus' *Germania* to the politics of nineteenth-century Britain, there are some intriguing moments to observe. Freeman's rather romantic liberalism led him to admire the Teutonic gift of liberty, whereas Seeley's imperialism led him instead to denounce 'loose talk of liberty' altogether; and one cannot but admire the neatness of Seeley's riposte to Freeman's notion that Britain owed her maritime supremacy to her Anglo-Saxon ancestry - why, he asked, had it taken until the sixteenth century for the Anglo-Saxon affinity with the sea to display itself?

But, there is something of a sense of impending claustrophobia as the story gets towards the end of the century. This may partly be the result of the fading conviction of the writers under discussion that they could either secure the ear of political leaders or would know what to say if they did, and partly the result of at least one of them having no great confidence that it was worth while putting pen to paper at all. In December 1887, Sidgwick wrote to J. A. Symonds: 'I am trying to absorb myself in my *Opus Magnum* on Politics. My position is that I seem to myself now to have grasped and analysed adequately the only possible method of dealing systematically with political problems; but my deep conviction is that I can yield as yet little fruit of practical utility - so doubt whether it is worth while to work it out in a book. Still man must work - and a Professor must write books.' Intermittently, *The Elements of Politics* is a good deal better than that might suggest - but only intermittently; and the *The Development of European Politics* is pretty well unreadable. One ought not to gloat or complain; the lesson of the twentieth century is hardly that political science can be scholarly, rigorous, useful and continuously exciting. Indeed, Sidgwick's fear that the line between rather dreary common sense and sheer hot air is a narrow one has been more than justified in the past hundred years.

Such gloomy reflections, however, are not what we get from *The Noble Science of Politics*; its authors are, as they say, intellectual historians, not moralists. They do not tell us to go and do better; they take it for granted that we are bound to go and do different. They deserve our thanks for the verve with which they remind what our predecessors actually did.

Images of dislocation

Blake Morrison

JAMES FENTON
Children in Exile
24pp. Edinburgh: Salamander. £5.
0507540392

MICHAEL HOFMANN
Nights in the Iron Hotel
48pp. Faber. £4.
0571131166

In his "Manifesto Against Manifestoes" (*Poetry Review*, Volume 73, No 3), James Fenton criticizes those, himself included, who have sloganized and categorized on behalf of contemporary British poetry. "The reality of schools, camps, influences, programmes and manifestoes is grossly exaggerated", he says; and "I hardly think that the distinction between a Martian and a Narrative school can be with substance." Our poetry may have gained more – not least readers – from such distinctions than Fenton admits, but he is right to question whether those readers can be reading properly if their chief concern is to identify a poet's team-colours. What will they make of the eight poems in Fenton's new book, for example, or of the forty in Michael Hofmann's first full-length collection? Fenton's title-poem is narrative of sorts but it also contains images – "The fireflies' brilliant use of the hyphen", pigeons swooping down "after a night on the tiles", "Florence spread like honey on the plain" – that might put it into the school of metaphor. Michael Hofmann's poems are largely episodes and vignettes, but they too use images – a small child like "a gleeful crustacean executing pincer movements", a gymnast swinging "like a hooked fish", a hedgehog "rolled over on its side like a broken castor", "the primitive roar of a kitchen geyser" – which might pass for the work of Hofmann's editor at Faber, Craig Raine. Story or simile? Clearly such categories will not get us very far in characterizing the work of two such idiosyncratic talents.

Fenton's beautifully produced little book opens with two poems which survey troubled (Third World) landscapes as panoramically as did Auden the troubled (European) landscapes of the 1930s:

Great crowds are fleeing from a major disaster
Down the long valleys, the greenswallowing wadis,
Down through the beautiful catastrophe of wind.
(*"Wind"*)

I saw that the shanty town had grown over the graves
and that the crowd lived among the memorials
That night the city was attacked with rockets.
(*"Lines for Translation into any Language"*)

Dreaming of France

Stephen Medcalf

GEOFFREY HILL
The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Péguy
31pp. Agenda Editions/André Deutsch. £3.
0 233 97549 7

My father in 1915, called up fresh from a London BA in French and English, carried with him the *Chanson de Roland*: in his copy he underlined Gautier's denunciation of versions of the *Chanson* in which "la Patrie et Dieu sont absents". It is that dream of France, almost as much as Charles Péguy, which Geoffrey Hill intends to recover. In his poem, a dream in which Péguy in a Beauce *maître* plays the part of Joseph the dreamer, exile and provider, and Domrémy is restored. The word-paintings of this dream, companions to Hill's former poems on Platonic England, are almost the loveliest things in the poem, but they are followed by tirades away to Péguy's actual life, the dream which in the *maître de la Sorbonne*, the *Dréux* affair, Péguy's death in the first battle of the Marne. The poem is a system of checks and balances built up by descriptions of objects laden with human memory, and themselves existing only in Péguy's time, by almost shifts whenever a vision or counter-vision becomes too deeply scored, and by following Péguy to keep his distance – both of time and of character – since it is not his charity that is celebrated (the title only suggests a parallel between Hill's relation to Péguy and Péguy's to Joan of Arc in

The view here is so commanding, and the poet so much in command of his material, that it is tempting to suppose that such sombre meditation is all that Fenton does, not merely what he does best. But there are other poems to remind us that he is also an accomplished writer of light verse. "God, A Poem", which depends on a Hardy-like paradox of God existing so as to announce that he does not exist, makes a fine atheistic joke ("Oh he said: 'If you lay off the crumpet/I'll see you alright in the end'"); and "Nothing", though hardly light verse, redeems itself from the hard-done-by, defeatist doggerel it comes close to being by the very stubbornness of its insistence that "Nothing I give [do/say/am] will make you love me more."

But the major work here is without doubt the title poem, where sombreness prevails. It runs to the same sort of middling length as some of Fenton's most successful earlier poems – "Chosun", "A German Requiem" and "A Staffordshire Murderer" – but is clearer, more candid, even rather didactic. It describes a group of Cambodian children, "students of calamity, graduates of famine", who have come to a home in Tuscany, where they are cared for by Americans (liberals who are in their way making amends for "an offence / It took America five years to commit") and embark on the daunting task of familiarizing themselves with European culture ("What is a Pope? What is a proper noun? / Where is Milan? Who won the Second World War?"). The poem does not dwell mawkishly on the children's violent history, but its effects show through in their bad dreams, their fears that the Tuscany forests are full of danger and their growing belief in the superiority of education over property: "if I have knowledge . . . No one can steal that from me." Education is the poem's main theme: we see the children with their "Technical Lego and significant distinctions"; and we also see the narrator, not Yeats's aloof "smiling public man" among school-children but more intimate, with more to learn himself, brought to a richer understanding of the motives and desires of the exile.

Better this frost, this blizzard than that sky
Better a concert pianist than a corpse, an engineer than
a shadow.

Better to dance under the fresco than to die.
Over such a distance (fifty quatrains, rhyming *abcb*), it would be surprising if there were not moments when the poet's concentration seems to flag. Some of the epithets – "treacherous waters", "threatened extinction" – come closer to cliché than even an overly accessible poem might want. The lines "I love this valley,

but I often wonder why / There's always and bend extra in the road" seem a near-whimsical superfluity, with that "often" uneasily close to "always" in the next line. The description of one boy being "Greedy for school, frantic to be in there" (my italics) looks more contrived (and rhyme-fulfilling) on the page than Fenton makes it sound when reading it aloud. But these are tiny jolts: there are remarkably few interruptions to the poem's steady "unfurling" and to the humane intelligence which it has to offer. Even a passage about a dog, Duschka, of little faith, can confront us with a wise and moving reflection:

He thought there was a quantum of love and attention
Which now he would be forced to share around
As first three Vietnamese and then four Cambodians
Trespassed on his ground.
It doesn't work like that. It never has done.
Love is accommodating. It makes space.

When Michael Hofmann's poems began to appear three or four years ago, they were immediately recognized as fresh, original, free from the derivative common to most poets in their early twenties. By now some of the novelty has worn off, and run together as a book the poems perhaps make less impact than they do individually in magazines. Influences, mostly Faber ones (Lowell, Muldoon, Paulin), are more apparent: the jokey surrealism of "1967-71" and "Alone" (neither, sadly, reprinted from Faber's *Poetry Introduction 5*) has given way to something less wayward but also less arresting. Youthfulness shows through in the prevalence of *hommages* to artists, Romantic poets, even (most embarrassingly) a former schoolteacher. Above all, the flat, laconic tone of voice, rarely rhyming, never getting above itself as it ranges over the minutiae of the contemporary world – vacuum cleaners, sex shops, DIY centres, toilets for the disabled, "Bealemania, mini-skirts, glue-sniffing, / Snuff movies", straw hats ("The kind that donkeys wear on the beach"), T-shirts, soda-water, Boots hair-setting gel, "spark plugs mixing with tampons in your handbag" – can begin to seem too relentlessly prosaic: there are no lift-offs, cadences, silvers down the spine.

Nights in the Iron Hotel is none the less an impressive first collection, one of the most promising to appear so far this decade. Shifting between the Germany he came from and the England he lives in, taking in Ireland, Czechoslovakia and the Netherlands *en route*, Hofmann has a strong feeling for dislocation, both in people (there are recurrent glimpses of middle-class couples, both young and old, "in a hotel in a foreign country / where the morals are different") and in places: "Furth it. Wald",

for example, shows an Audenesque fascination with border-towns:

These strips of towns, with their troubled histories,
they are lost in the words like Hansel and Gretel.
Courtesans, peace conferences, they changed hands
so often, they became indistinguishable, worrisome.
Polyglot and juggled like Belgium, each of them
a spare innie in the other language to fall back on.

Hofmann is also fascinated by films and television: "Dependants", which quietly links the lonely narrator-spector with the woman-starved inmates of a prison movie, is evidently based on *Brite Force* (1947), starring Burt Lancaster; "Entropy (The Late Show)" compares the use of the split screen by early Soviet pioneers with its use today in television coverage of darts, the players "standing like stars" on one side, the board on the other; and a reference to "the rare Ava Gardner, the last woman alive / Modelling her cheek workshirts / On the Beach" is part of Hofmann's my, filtered contribution, in "Shapes of Things", to the literature of nuclear war. But the influence of film goes deeper than that, into Hofmann's technique, with its rapid cutting between subjects and its skill at making surprising connections.

The book's opening lines – "Having your photograph on my bedside table / is like having a propeller there" – alert us to an interest in unlikely "correspondences", which recurs later and more successfully in "Hausfrau", where a jealous wife is advised to grant her adulterous husband "a mass-exemption, like the students of '68, / who no longer have a 'past' and instead hold / positions in the civil service", and in the excellent "Touring Company", where the disparate elements of the poem – the poet's actress girlfriend, small change left on the floor, dust, blood and "dead human skin" – are drawn together into a meditation on mortality that is funny and serious at the same time:

Yesterday, you played five small parts
in *Macbeth*: four cowards and a murdered child
and friend drew a red line across your throat
with his dagger. I sat in the front row,
worrying about the psychological consequences
of being murdered every night for a month.

It is often difficult to catch a new writer's tone of voice, and there will be those who take Hofmann to be a whimsical and even cynical raconteur. That would be a mistake. He is a vulnerable and at times rather naive lyric poet, whose attentiveness to the workaday world does not preclude an interest in larger themes, and who on the evidence of this collection must be reckoned to have a bright future.

But there are five more verses, and the poem ends not in charities, nor in the faith and hope that have been briefly approved, but, with sad dignity, in words alone. "In memory of those things these words were born", Does Hill in this last line contrast "memory" with "history" as Péguy does, and claim that not only, with history, considers "life at the moment it becomes dead", but remains with memory in the event? I should like to think that the poem does that: it is refreshing, melodious, intelligent but puzzled, and I am not sure. I am sure, however, that we are lucky to live when so good a poem appears.

In *Three Literary Friendships* (184pp. Quercus, £8.95, 0 7043 2370 2) John Lehmann examines the mutually creative influences springing from the association of Byron with Shelley, Keats with Keats, and Robert Frost with Edward Thomas. As Lehmann reveals in his introduction, for him "one of the most intriguing aspects of . . . the poetry of the last 200 years is the way in which two outstanding and highly gifted poets have come together for one reason or another – living proximity . . . or the discovery of close spiritual affinity – and for a certain number of years have influenced one another in their being and art, and indeed brought out the best, perhaps the unexpected, in one another's gifts" (although, as he also confesses, "such mutual influence is not easy to detect or define, and one has to be guided as much by intuition and imagination as by recorded fact"). The work is illustrated with pages of black-and-white plates.

The essentially gratuitous

John McGilchrist

LEWIS HYDE
The Gift: Imagination and the erotic
life of property
33pp. New York: Random House. \$17.95.
0391523016

Lewis Hyde has taken the idea of works of art as gifts and elaborated it in a well-written and unpretentious book. The subject is an important and interesting one, perhaps even more than this book suggests. In our own society, art, like other things, is governed by the market. This leads to many absurdities. On a good day, with the wind behind him, Salvador Dali was capable, according to one of his associates, of signing 1,800 blank sheets of paper in an hour, aided by three attendants who briskly moved the paper as the master dashed off his signature. The immediate rise and subsequent collapse of Dali's pecuniary fortunes which ensued would be, for Hyde, a demonstration of the futility of treating gifts – works of art – as commodities, though it might alternatively be seen as a lesson in basic economics.

Market economies are contrasted by Hyde with "gift communities", in which property circulates, and does not accumulate as capital. But what is a gift? Gifts are rare things. Hyde discusses a number of "gift communities", such as the Kula ring of the Trobriand Islanders described by Malinowski. Here objects circulate in an extended ring of islands, passing from hand to hand, and taking perhaps two years to complete a circuit. These objects are described as gifts. If a gift, though, is something freely given, with no expectation of return, then this perpetual motion of property, so important as it is to the islanders, and so attractive as it may be to the Western observer, is not a market economy, is not an example of giving, but a sophisticated instance of barter.

There are, of course, important differences between this phenomenon and straightforward barter. One results from distance: the giver gives to one from whom he has not directly received, and receives from another to whom he has not directly given. Another results from the fact that the process cannot end in any permanent advantage to any one member of the ring. So although the material effect is one of barter, the psychological and social focus is the act of trust placed by the individual in the social group, rather than the strengthening of any one individual.

In this respect it is like the giving of birthday or Christmas presents. We do not discuss their value, we do not formally require reciprocity; the act itself is what matters. Yet because the act is predictable and formalized by social custom, it is not an instance of free giving. Only "unbirthday" presents can be that. The meaning of a gift depends on its being more than is expected or required, and on its having no security of return. Once gift-giving is formalized, it becomes both expected and secure. This means that free gifts can no longer be made within the system; and even "utilitarian" gifts, such as those which are designed to cement interests of some kind, lose their point since it depends on the spontaneous nature of the gift, and on the vulnerability of the giver in making an act of trust. This has the incidental, and perhaps paradoxical, effect that it is relatively difficult to give a gift in a gift community, and the easiest place for giving, and the one in which gifts have the greatest meaning, is one in which relations between individuals are as far as possible governed by the market.

Hyde's general aim is to show the superiority of a "commerce of gifts", in particular for the artist, whose place in a market society is equivocal. The place of the artist in such a society is a fascinating question, and one that Hyde has been brought to ponder in relation to his own life: he has worked as an electrician, a teacher and a carpenter in his attempt to support himself while writing. Yet perhaps, on the practical question of how artists are to make a living, nothing much new can be said. Hyde's own conclusions are familiar enough: an artist must either work, get a patron, or sell his achievements; and he will be best able to do this in a society which can "con-

vert market wealth to gift wealth", thus settling "the debt it owes to those who have dedicated their lives in the realisation of a gift".

But does society owe a debt to the artist, and in what sense does his dedication differ from that of anyone who devotes his time to something he wants to do, or is more or less compelled to do? The sacrificial flavour depends on the fact that art usually pays badly. Thus to argue that artists should be paid because they have made a special sacrifice is to argue in a circle. If they can expect payment from society, it is because they provide something society wants, not because of something they may be supposed to have forgone on society's behalf. Moreover dedication implies a degree of voluntary control which might not be appropriate. It is likely that what makes the biggest difference to the welfare of the individual artist and, perhaps more important in the long run, to the art itself, is not an as yet undefined "gift economy", but a society in which patrons (of whatever kind) are educated in a manner worthy of their artists, and in which artists go some way towards satisfying their patrons. The work of art comes to the artist as a gift of sorts, and he makes a gift of it to humanity. Humanity may or may not make a return gift. What Hyde seems to be asking is that the artist's work should be treated not as a gift by its recipients, but as an object of trade.

The economic sense in which art may be considered a gift is the one which takes up most of the book. But, as Hyde recognizes, there are at least three distinct respects in which a work of art may be thought of as a gift. In the first place, it comes to the artist, initially at least, from outside the field of conscious intention. Then the ability to do the work is a gift. Lastly the work is presented to others as a gift of the artist. The first of these senses seems to me to have the most important implications. For one thing, it suggests that there is no unbroken line of progression for the critic to follow from the achieved work back to its origins. As a gift, it is unpredictable, unsolicited, and possibly unwanted. This does not prevent its being treated, once it exists, as inevitable, and as though designed to serve a conscious purpose of the artist. The essentially gratuitous – gift-like – nature of art is the source of much of its power to please and, above all, to liberate. Unfortunately academic criticism has to be committed to the assumption that everything has a purpose, and that it is its task to show what that purpose is.

"The passage into mystery always refreshes . . . we are lightened when our gifts rise from pools we cannot fathom. Then we know they are not a solitary egotism and they are inexhaustible. Anything contained within a boundary must contain as well its own exhaustion." Hyde's enthusiasm is appropriate. Enthusiasm itself he sees as an embodied, and bodily moving, gift, where abstract thought belongs to the world of market exchange. "Cash exchange is to gift exchange what reason is to enthusiasm", he writes. Hyde contrasts the circulation of gifts among some primitive peoples with the hoarding of those same gifts when they passed into the hands of the first anthropologists, and were despatched to the museums of the great universities. Perhaps it is an inevitable effect of the competition of individuals for material, and for things to say about the material, that works of art become so readily transformed by

the academic process from gifts into private commodities, and even things to say about them become private property.

What I find particularly interesting is that Hyde should link abstraction with exchange, on the one hand, and embodiment with gifts, on the other. For it seems to me that in a work of art it is whatever is unique and unrepeatable which might be called a gift, its uniqueness being a product of its physical being. Equally on the other side, whatever is repeatable and could be worked up to again from general principles, might be described as the product of exchange (for labour), this being whatever may be abstracted from the work of art. Once again, if we recognize some element of art as a gift, this has important consequences for literary criticism.

"Celebratory speech is the return gift by which what has been received by the self is freed and passed along." We do not live in a celebratory age. Religion has been stripped as far as possible of the celebration which constitutes its essential nature, and made to serve purposes, which are inevitably the purposes of the age. Perhaps the tendency to rationalize and functionalize religion is not so new; there has been, from Pelagius onwards, a tendency in Western religious thought towards the idea that goodness, and the fruits of goodness, are the objects of exchange, and can be earned. Institutional Christianity has offered enticements to invest in goodness, despite the fact that the parable of the vineyard suggests that a good life is a gift in both senses – virtue is its own reward. Spirituality is undemocratic; of the two, Chuang Tzu writes that only he who already has it can receive it. The gifts of art, being gifts, are equally undemocratic; like those of religion, they are gratuitous and not to be accounted for. In the light of this it surprises me that Hyde should ask for something less like a lottery in response from society, since to do so is not to move toward, but away from, the concept of the gift.

"I celebrate myself": Walt Whitman is one of the two poets to whom Hyde devotes a chapter in this book (the other being Ezra

Pound). Whitman's poetry is a lively expression of enthusiasm for the myriads of individual things in creation: "even Whitman's emphasis on the masses arises from his desire to nurture the idiosyncratic", as Hyde says. Like Lawrence, whom in verse form, in zest of phrase, and in certain aspects of his psychology he a little resembles, Whitman celebrates the transmission of life, both within himself physically – "my respiration and inspiration, the beating of my heart, the passing of blood and air through my lungs" – and more metaphorically, from living being to living being. In the pleasure he took in plenitude, in his love for the individual and gratuitous, and in his naive enthusiasm, he is Hyde's perfect choice to express the celebration of the gift. Sadly the chapter on Pound is mostly about dollars. The balance between discussing how poets deal with money, and, much more interestingly, how viewing art as a gift changes our attitude to it is uneasy in this book.

The emphasis throughout Whitman's poetry on respiration is reminiscent of Wordsworth; and indeed the sense of physical vitality, mixed with an innocent if sometimes mildly absurd fascination with the self, is not unlike Wordsworth. (They both repeatedly connect inspiration with the experience of lying under trees, though Wordsworth would have been surprised by Whitman's habit of wrestling with a sapling before breakfast.) It has always seemed to me that Wordsworth's egotism is hardly egotistic, since he has an almost selfless enthusiasm for what he looks on as pure gift – the word "give" is one of the single most common words in Wordsworth's poetry, more common even than such characteristic words as "feel" or "seem". There is no more central idea in his philosophy of nature and the poet than the idea of the gift. The odd thing is that Hyde's two areas of interest come together so perfectly in Wordsworth: for it was not just inspiration, but money, which came to him again and again as gifts: the legacies, the sinecure as Stamp-Distributor, the civil list pension. Unreliable as a precedent, of course; but gifts – however much Lewis Hyde may wish the contrary were true – are unreliable.

Realizations

NARRATIVE, PICTORIAL,
AND THEATRICAL ARTS IN
NINETEENTH-CENTURY
ENGLAND

MARTIN MEISEL

In this richly illustrated study of the relationship of art, drama, and fiction in the 19th century, Meisel illuminates the collaboration between storytelling and pictorial painting, pictorial dramaturgy, and series illustrated fiction.

Focusing on Great Britain, but including discussion of France and Germany, the author reveals living connections and formal similarities among painting, plays, and novels, describing the expressive and narrative conventions they shared. \$58.50

Princeton
University Press.

15A Epsom Road, Guildford,
Surrey GU1 3JT (0483) 88364



كتاب
مكتبة
الشيخ
محمد
البركات

The daring and the chatter

Julian Symons

DIANE JOHNSON
Dashiell Hammett: A Life
336pp. Chatto and Windus. £12.95.
07011 2766 X

This is the third biographical study of Dashiell Hammett to appear within as many years, following Richard Layman's *Shadow Man* and William F. Nolan's gossipy *Hammett: A Life at the Edge*. Between the conception and the achievement of any previous book on Hammett fell the shadow of Lillian Hellman. Layman's book was, as he said in the preface, written "without her assistance and without hindrance from her". He remarked also that Hellman had obtained control of all Hammett's copyrights after his death on the ground that she might "write a book about the deceased or his works" if "a reasonable offer is made". For the sum of \$5,000 she took charge of the estate, leaving Hammett's family with no legal claim to any benefit from his works, even though his will left half of the estate to his daughter Josephine, a quarter to his daughter Mary, and only the remaining quarter to Hellman. It should be added in explanation that when Hammett died his works were out of print, his assets small, and debts or liens against the estate over \$200,000. Hellman was strongly influential in the Hammett revival. She wrote several memoirs of Hammett but no biography, and she discouraged biographers other than the one she had chosen, at first Steven Marcus and then Diane Johnson. There are similarities between her attitude and that of George Orwell's widow Sonia before she invited Bernard Crick to write Orwell's biography, an invitation she later tried vainly to retract. Ms Johnson's book has been long awaited as the authorized biography.

It is a deeply disappointing book. The gushing tone of the first acknowledgment, giving thanks for "the gracious cooperation of Hammett's dearest friend and executor, Lillian Hellman" does not promise well, but in fact no Hellman blue pencil is obvious in the text. The account of their relationship lacks nothing in candour, including as it does the revelation that Hammett sometimes asked Hellman to "make a threesome" to see how far she would go, and that they never made love again after her rejection of him one night in 1942, although they often lived together during the remaining nineteen years of his life. The book's failure springs from Johnson's inability to order and shape the material under hand. She had, it is true, the basic problem that her two principal witnesses were untrustworthy. When he had become famous Hammett deliberately romanticized his life as a Pinkerton man, and Hellman's various accounts of her life with him were, as she herself engagingly admitted, by no means wholly accurate. Notes are sometimes astray. Incidents didn't occur quite in the way she describes them, perhaps some of them didn't happen at all.

Confronted with such inveterate dramatizers, who is a biographer to do? Surely compare known fact with embroidered statement, look carefully for confirmation of good but improbable stories, present a balance of probabilities, hedge where necessary. But that is not Johnson's way. She often presents possible and even unlikely statements in a way that makes them look like fact, and she rarely bothers to mention doubts about the authenticity of any story. Two instances will show her approach. Several years after the event Hammett spoke of his involvement with a Pinkerton man in the Betty Arbuckle rape case of 1921, and also told the story of an incident earlier in his Pinkerton career when he was offered several thousand dollars by agents of mine owners to assassinate an IWW leader named Frank Little who was in fact dragged out from a boarding house during the course of a strike, and lynched. Hammett's involvement depends in both cases almost entirely on his own word, but Johnson accepts it without question, and in the Little case goes on to conjecture that through the case "Hammett saw that the actions of the guards and the guards, of the detective and the man he's talking, are releases of a single sensibility, on the fringe where murderers and thieves live".

She does not mention that Hammett's wife and his daughter Mary said that he did not work on the Arbuckle case, nor that, according to his daughter, he said that at the time "he didn't care if his clients were bums, he was strictly out to do his job", and so was prepared to help break a strike. The remark makes the high-flown thoughts Johnson attributes to him seem unlikely. These are small points taken in isolation, but a biography is made from dozens of such points.

There is a sense in which Johnson has been hampered both by Hellman's reminiscences and by Layman's book. She has deliberately avoided paraphrasing Hellman or using passages from her writings about Hammett, preferring wherever possible to rely on Hammett's colourful letters. The letters are excellent, and one would not wish to be without them, but the effect of this approach in the omission of many incidents that, whether wholly accurate or not, throw light on both Hammett and Hellman. One is the long tale in *Penultimate* about the snapping turtle that survived being shot and then decapitated by Hammett, and prompted Hellman to telephone the New York Zoological Society with questions about the nature of life, although she is prepared to argue with him about speculative matters. The result is again that she omits a good many details (for instance, that an area in southern Maryland was known as Hammettville) while correcting him by claiming that Hammett's father was not a hard drinker as Layman had it, but, according to Dashiell's sister Reba, "never touched a drop". The end result of this approach is that a good deal may be found in both Hellman and Layman that remains unmentioned in this new biography. The treatment of Hammett's work for the studios in Hollywood is particularly inadequate, and anybody interested in it will find far more information in Layman and Nolan.

There is also Johnson's style. She has not wanted to quote too much, and so has included "passages based on Hammett's thoughts or feelings" which she assures us have their origins in his letters. One can only say that they must have suffered a disastrous change. We are admitted into the thoughts of Jose, the young nurse Hammett married, in writing of sickly banality:

Of course Jose wanted him to succeed as a writer, but she did not understand how much it meant to him. In her heart she wished he were something already - perhaps a clerk in the store - and when he reproached her with this secret wish of hers, for he saw, it seemed, into her heart, she was ashamed that it was true. She did not think highly of the occupation of writer, the way he had to struggle, and the hours he kept.

But Josephine thought Hammett was a wonderful husband, so intelligent and kindly, so helpful with the baby and so fond of her, and so brave about his death - for he wasn't well.

There are many similar passages in this book, some attributed to Hammett's young daughters Jo and Mary, others to Hammett himself. "He wrote letters signed Love, Love and kisses, Kisses and hugs, Many kisses, Lots of love. But it was love, real love, that he could never speak of, except when drinking."

Direct quotation would have been less embarrassing than such sentimental near-fiction, but that might have involved authorial comment, which is almost everywhere avoided. Among the devices Johnson uses to retain impersonality is the occasional interpolation of "voices", stories recounted by friends commenting on Hammett's behaviour at a particular time. Thus, one remembers his throwing handfuls of forks, knives and spoons around a restaurant in his drinking days in Hollywood during the mid-1930s, another his falling flat on his face in the Trocadero and elsewhere, another his taking a ring from a friend and refusing to give it back. Many of these anecdotes are about Hammett's ways with women. A naked hooker is told to stay in the bathroom at a party given by Hammett; Sidney Perelman goes up there and is discovered by his wife Laura and others. "It ended with Laura going off to San Francisco with Hammett... they were gone for days, and there was hell to pay all around". Another woman, recalls a friend, having "a little fling" with Hammett, and breaking it off because "she couldn't take all the whores. It was so insulting." Hammett found great pleasure in

prostitutes. A young secretary assigned to him by the studio went each day to his house, but did not work. Sometimes he failed to appear, sometimes he came down and they did the crossword puzzle together, sometimes prostitutes came down the stairs, often black or Oriental, a different one every time. It is not surprising that he contracted VD four times, in 1936 so badly that rectal irrigations were unsuccessful, and he had to be heated up in an oxygen tent for three days, so that he lay delirious with a temperature of 107 degrees. The treatment was successful.

There is a lot of new information about Hammett in the book, including most of the stories in the preceding paragraph. (Layman



calls the 1936 occasion Hammett's second dose of clap, not his fourth, and does not mention the grim details.) Some of it shows his agreeable qualities, and suggests his charm. The letters to Hellman are constantly lively and amusing, whether he is telling her that "I have to go on practically masturbating" - by which he meant sleeping around - in her absence, or reproaching her when he heard rumours that she was doing the same thing: "Tsi Tsi Just a she-Hammett." Several stories show his indifference to money and readiness to give it away, although he was delighted when Hellman asked him whether a brooch he had given her cost as much as five hundred dollars. Yes, he said, but not as much as six hundred, and put her down as the five hundred type. After neglecting his wife and children (there is a letter from Jose to his publisher Alfred Knopf saying that she had heard nothing from him for months) he bought his daughters expensive presents, "and once when he had won at the track he gave Jo fifty dollars, and she was only nine, and 50 dollars each for Jose and Mary. It was a fortune." In 1945 he bought a house for them in West Los Angeles, and became deeply attached to Jo, to whom he wrote many whimsical charming letters.

By this time the shadows were closing in on his life. He had written no book for more than a decade, and told Jo: "It's swell having a new novel not to do: I was getting pretty bored with just not working on that half a dozen or so old ones." He had temporarily escaped the problems of drinking and not drinking, writing and not writing, by volunteering for the army at the age of forty-eight. He found army life on the Aleutian Islands in Alaska enjoyable - as Johnson says, he had throughout his life a liking for male society, and made no objection when the recruits called him Pop - but he emerged from it looking, as he said, like God's older brother, scrawny, grey-haired, with a full set of false teeth, his good looks gone. Ahead lay imprisonment for his refusal to answer questions about the funds of a Communist-front organization; poverty because his books were virtually proscribed and his income was attached by the Internal Revenue Service, and years of illness. All these he bore with exemplary patience and courage.

Johnson quotes several letters from this last period, most of them determinedly cheerful, but gives little new information. She omits Hammett's meeting after many years with his conservative brother Richard, and his reply to Richard's question whether he was a Communist.

"I'm a Marxist." She seems to have no doubt that he belonged to the American Communist Party, and says that he wanted to go to Spain during the Civil War, but was told by the Party to stay at home. "He was expected to be more useful here, and he tried to be." No documentation is given for this statement. Johnson is inclined to regard Hammett's refusal to answer questions as heroic, something not borne out by reading the Court transcript, although of course his refusal to name names showed a courage that many Hollywood actors, directors and writers lacked.

The book's chief weakness, apart from the sloppiness of the writing, is that it is a portrait of Nick Charles rather than Dashiell Hammett. The Nick Charles element was certainly present in Hammett's personality - the offhand clown, hard drinking, wisecracking, whimsicality, liking for good clothes and all kinds of women - but it was the least interesting side of him, as man and writer. John Crosby is quoted as saying, when Hammett died, that American television was full of "imitations of imitation Sam Spades. . . . The stuff is turned out like salt-water taffy now, rather sexy and violent stuff. . . . Only the corruption remains; the talent has long since fled." Crosby's words are truer still today, when the dozens of books and television films about assorted villains are the palest copies of a truly original talent. In her introduction Johnson makes the interesting suggestion that the handing down of authority and the conflict between father and son are central to Hammett's work. The Continental Op, she says, is ruled by a powerful father in the Old Man. "Other fathers in Hammett's work prevail over sons", and "the central crime in two of his novels, *The Glass Key* and *Red Harvest*, is the murder of a son by his father".

Do the stories and books, then, come from the writer's need to "dramatize his attitude to authority"? Johnson leaves the idea there, without attempting to justify it in detail, but it makes considerable sense in relation to Hammett's failure to write any full-length fiction for the last quarter-century of his life. If the books represent a rebellion against authority, his relationship to the American Communist Party was one of complete submission. He followed it faithfully through the dogmatism of the Party line in the 1940s and 1950s, implicitly and sometimes explicitly endorsing attitudes that were on insult to his intelligence and integrity, loyal as a son to an erring parent. The nearest he got to criticism was that answer to his brother's question "Are you a Communist?": "I'm a Marxist". But such determined submission of the individual to an authority that was by definition never wrong may have been the final factor removing the need to write in Hammett.

He could not write, Johnson says, because he had nothing left to write about. She is referring in his severance from San Francisco, from obscurity, and from what she calls the social class to which he owed allegiance. It is true that he had probably spun the best material out of his Pinkerton years; but other subjects surely lay to hand in New York and Hollywood. Whether one accepts the idea that his need to rebel against authority had disappeared with adherence to the Party line, believes as some of his friends did that he was atrociously impelled towards self-destruction, or says simply that some flaw of personality made him unable to cope with success although he stoically endured early struggles and late poverty and disregard, there is plenty of evidence that inability to write caused him anguish.

Hammett loved the Aleutians, their savage coldness and extraordinary beauty, "such mountains and lakes as no other place can match". He read a great deal during the long hours of leisure there, Marx and left-wing novels and pamphlets, Charlotte Brontë and Bram Stoker. He discovered Auden, and declared "a W. H. Auden week". The opening lines of one of the sonnets to *Journey to Nowhere* may have struck home to him poignantly:

The life of man is never quite completed;
The daring and the chatter will go on;
But, as an artist feels his power go,
These walk the earth and know themselves defeated.

The interesting Hammett story is not that of how many girls he laid, or how many times he fell flat on his face or back. It is the story of a talent that disappeared, a man defeated.

The case for the Common Market

Eric Roll

ROY JENKINS (Editor)
Britain and the EEC
289pp. Macmillan. £20 (paperback, £7.95).
0333 34690 4
ALIM EL-AGRAA (Editor)
Britain Within the European Community: The way forward
356pp. Macmillan. £25 (paperback, £8.95).
0333 34523 1

It is a happy coincidence that these two volumes addressed to the same set of issues should have been brought out by the same publisher at a time when public debate on Britain's role in the European Community - and with it the future of the Community itself - is showing signs of becoming more lively. Both volumes cover much the same ground, but while that edited by Roy Jenkins - presenting papers read at Section F of the British Association, that is to say, not to a specialized audience - could be read with advantage by general readers, that edited by Ali M. El-Agraa contains much more technical economic analysis, sometimes of a quite sophisticated kind, and is thus likely to appeal more to the specialist.

The books sum up nearly twenty-five years of existence of the Community and ten of Britain's membership of it. With two exceptions, the authors in El-Agraa's volume are practising academics (one of the exceptions, the disting-

uished director of the Policy Studies Institute, John Pinder, has also contributed to the Jenkins volume), while the contributors to *Britain and the EEC* include, apart from the editor himself, a former President of the EEC Commission, a current Vice-President, and a number of others who, though essentially academic, also have fairly active relationships outside the university.

Both books are comprehensive. Each contains chapters on the history, the politics and the institutions of the EEC, and on Britain's relations with it: in *Britain and the EEC* two chapters, by F. S. Northedge and Mr Pinder; in *Britain within the European Community* by Pinder and Stephen C. Holt. There are chapters on agriculture, by John Marsh and Christopher Tugendhat in the first volume, and by El-Agraa in the second. Regional policy and the impact of membership on our industrial performance are dealt with by Geoffrey Denton and Robert Grant in the first volume, where Martin Woolf writes on European Trade Policy; there are chapters on, broadly speaking, the same topics in the second volume by Harvey Armstrong, Alan Butt Philip and the editor. Energy policy, transport policy and social policy all receive explicit treatment in the second volume, while defence policy, which has a separate chapter in El-Agraa's book, is dealt with in the other as part of the political evolution of the Community by Mr Jenkins himself and Roger Morgan.

One problem of special, and topical interest

sanctions as a weapon of great potential. Since then, the commentators at any rate have swung over to a sceptical position - arguably too much so. The attempt, however, to dress up this change of view in the language of T. S. Kuhn's scientific "paradigms" is misplaced, a cheap attempt at conceptual trendiness. The book is also rather weak on economics and indeed on analysis generally. While key points are seldom absent they are not highlighted. Instead, they tend to be tucked away in a catalogue of numbered items or a subordinate clause in mid-paragraph, and so will not be recognized by the uninitiated. Thus, nowhere do the authors properly spell out the basic point that, since international trade is mutually beneficial, any effective sanction entails costs for the sanctioner, and these costs may prove less acceptable than the damage inflicted on the "target". Similarly, the notion of substitution and its varieties (in trade, in consumption, in production) is not adequately set forth.

The treatment of particular case studies is open to analogous criticism. In the case of Rhodesia, the subtleties of South Africa's role are missed. Of course the South Africans played a key role in the ostensible defeat of sanctions, but they also had no intention of taking on Rhodesia as a permanent addition to their load of political handicaps; so they were careful to limit support for the Smith regime, and ultimately put pressure on Smith to reach a settlement. Another example occurs in the discussion of the grain embargo. The authors diagnose Argentina as the chief villain of the piece (or peace), for refusing to cooperate with the United States:

To make good on its highly profitable grain deals with the Soviet Union, Argentina exported less to its traditional customers - Chile, Peru, Spain, Italy and Japan. But those countries did not suffer, because they were able to replace Argentinian grain with the cheaper, embargoed American grain. It was belatedly recognized by the Carter administration that Argentina's refusal to participate in the embargo could make it largely ineffective.

The crucial time here is not Argentinian behaviour, but America's own failure to curb its oil of grain exports in line with the amounts embargoed. If embargoed US grain was available on the cheap to Chile and Co. it is hardly surprising that they preferred it to more expensive Argentinian produce, or that the Argentinians felt obliged to look elsewhere for markets.

Despite such shortcomings, the book has merits as a work of survey and a catalogue of the literature. The massive thirty-page bibliography at the end would run to at least fifty pages if it included in addition all the works cited in footnotes to the text.

is that of the European Monetary System. In *Britain and the EEC*, Geoffrey E. Wood comes to a negative conclusion as regards the value of the EMS within its present scope, namely to moderate exchange-rate fluctuations in member nations' currencies; he compares this system unfavourably with the possible institution of a real "European Money", or at least an agreement among members on common monetary policies while maintaining a floating-rate system. Presumably Mr Wood would, therefore, reject the plea, explicit or implied, by a number of his co-authors that Britain should join the EMS, a conclusion also reached in a recent study by a House of Lords Committee, which was widely supported when the report was debated. In the El-Agraa volume, David Llewellyn takes a broadly similar view, though he goes even further than Wood in deploring not only a convergence between members of their monetary policies as a precondition of an exchange-rate system, but harmonization over the whole range of macroeconomic policies. It is not surprising that economists should choose to emphasize the difficulty of maintaining a reasonably stable exchange-rate system in the absence of such convergence. It may be, however, that in practical terms it is easier to get governments to agree in the first place on an exchange-rate system, the maintenance of which will require a degree of convergence in economic policies, rather than the other way round.

Special mention should be made of Cripps's contribution to the Jenkins volume. This is an important study (more technical than the rest of the book) of the problem of macroeconomic policy for both Britain and the Community. It is particularly relevant in a time of depression, when there is still little prospect of an early resumption of adequate growth. Cripps's conclusion, briefly, is that unilateral reflation (by the UK) would have a very high cost in terms of the trade balance, while a general reflation in

Europe would be beneficial to the UK, though (given the structure of our trade) not as beneficial as a general reflation in the rest of the world outside Europe.

Whether the "best" choice, of a reflation outside Europe - presumably in the United States, Japan and the countries of the Third World (how, one wonders, given the present problem of their indebtedness?) - is realistically more open, as against the second best, of a general and coordinated reflation within Europe, is very difficult to determine, as both still seem very distant.

Another topic already very much on the agenda and likely to become increasingly so, that of foreign and security policy, is referred to in Jenkins's introductory essay. His conclusion is a quite clear-cut: he is in favour of a positive development, in which he hopes Britain will play a leading role, a conclusion supported by Northedge in his analysis of the history of Britain's attitude to the Community.

On the twin questions likely to be uppermost in most readers' minds - how has Britain fared inside the Community, and should it stay in? - it would be difficult and possibly unfair to burden the collective authorship of these books with a single, definite view. El-Agraa, who asks the question explicitly, has no doubt that membership has been beneficial, while Jenkins's strongly pro-European views have long been on record and are eloquently re-stated here. To one reader at least (who may be prejudiced), none of the political or economic arguments, general or specific, put forward by any of the authors, seems to point in the opposite direction. However, while one may draw a generally favourable conclusion from these two books as far as our continued membership is concerned, one other thing clearly emerges: neither the future prosperity of the Community nor the benefit Great Britain may be expected to derive from its membership are secure without a far more active participation by the UK in the Community's further development.

The booming bean

V. Bulmer-Thomas

LAIRD W. BERGAD
Coffee and the Growth of Agrarian Capitalism in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico
242pp. Princeton University Press. £23.90 (paperback, £12.60).
0691 07646 4

"Coffee and society" has provided the theme for many good books on the republics of Latin America. One thinks immediately of Marco Palacios's study of Colombia, Carolyn Hall's of Costa Rica and Stanley Stein's on Vassouras in Brazil. Laird W. Bergad would, I imagine, be happy to see his own work as extending this tradition.

The attraction of the theme is not hard to explain. In each of the main coffee-producing countries of Latin America, coffee exports experienced a spectacular rise in the nineteenth century, which affected profoundly not only the country's overall economic performance, but also the markets for land, labour and capital, which in turn affected social relations and, at times, political developments.

The connection of coffee with Puerto Rican society, however, is at first somewhat surprising. In both the early nineteenth and the twentieth century, Puerto Rico has been thought of as a sugar society, but one of the merits of Professor Bergad's study is the sharp reminder he gives that by the 1870s coffee had equalled sugar in terms of foreign-exchange earnings and by 1897 accounted for nearly 80 per cent of exports by value.

In the following two years (1898-99), Puerto Rico was annexed to the United States and suffered a very severe hurricane. Both events had a disastrous impact on the thriving coffee industry; the hurricane uprooted coffee plantations, reducing in the short term the prospect of high levels of production and exports, while the annexation brought Puerto Rico within the tariff structure of the United States, which favoured domestic production of sugar over coffee. The coffee industry never recovered from these two blows and Bergad's preface describes evocatively the neglected and abandoned coffee haciendas of the Puerto Rican interior.

These criticisms apart, Professor Bergad's study is a welcome addition to our understanding of coffee societies in general and Puerto Rico in particular. The author has had access to a mass of archival material, which has enabled him to study the impact of coffee on society at the level of the *municipio*. This micro approach has proved particularly useful in analysis of the labour market, where information at the macro level is often either absent or misleading.

done coffee haciendas of the Puerto Rican interior.

He sees a certain inevitability in this cycle of economic life and death. Indeed, in his conclusion he uses it to provide support for a weak version of dependency theory: "The development of monocultural economies in different geographical regions of Latin America has been an endemic problem. . . . In Latin America boom and bust cycles, such as that of coffee in Puerto Rico, have followed a consistent pattern from region to region." In support of this contention he offers a brief view of the other coffee-producing countries, notably Costa Rica and Colombia.

Unfortunately, Bergad's conclusions are not supported by his evidence. He makes a very convincing case that the failure of coffee to generate economic and political stability in nineteenth-century Puerto Rico was due to the behaviour of immigrant entrepreneurs, who came from Spain with the intention of accumulating capital as quickly as possible before retiring to the mother country. These immigrants dominated all aspects of the coffee trade and had no interest in diversification or the development of social infrastructure, except in so far as it affected the profitability of their own enterprises. This tension, however, between *criollos* and *peninsulares* is peculiar to colonial Latin America and makes Puerto Rico something of a special case. In the nineteenth century, in Costa Rica, for example, foreign merchants were present in the coffee trade, but it was essentially a national industry and foreign control was never allowed to penetrate too far; as a result, coffee did contribute to economic and political stability in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

These criticisms apart, Professor Bergad's study is a welcome addition to our understanding of coffee societies in general and Puerto Rico in particular. The author has had access to a mass of archival material, which has enabled him to study the impact of coffee on society at the level of the *municipio*. This micro approach has proved particularly useful in analysis of the labour market, where information at the macro level is often either absent or misleading.

Benefactors' benefactor

Edward Abraham

RAGNAR SOHLMAN
The Legacy of Alfred Nobel: The story behind the Nobel Prizes
Translated by Elspeth Harley Schubert
144pp. Bodley Head. £8.95.
0370 309901

PETER WILHELM
The Nobel Prize
111pp. Windlesham: Springwood. £12.95.
086254 1115

Ragnar Sohlman's very readable little book is a lucid and edited version of *En Testamente*, first published in Swedish in 1950. It has been produced now to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Nobel's birth.

The international character, the scope and monetary value of the Nobel Prizes and the grand occasion of their presentation in Stockholm for more than eighty years, have made them as well known as any prizes in history. But the life and personality of Nobel himself, who founded them from a fortune estimated to be the equivalent of £60 million in present-day currency, and the problems encountered in setting up the Nobel Foundation are not common knowledge.

Ragnar Sohlman was Nobel's personal assistant. He found himself, unexpectedly, named as an executor of his employer's will; and it was largely his loyalty and energy that enabled Nobel's wishes to be carried out. His book records personal memories of this major episode in his life and supplements an earlier work (H. Schück and R. Sohlman's *The Life of Alfred Nobel*, 1929) which includes a history of the Nobel family and accounts of Alfred Nobel's inventions.

Alfred Bernhard Nobel wrote his final will in Paris in November 1895, without the advice of a lawyer. His wish to reward merit and contribute to human welfare was clear, but the implementation of this wish was less simple than he had apparently supposed it would be. His instructions that prizes should be awarded to those who, during the last year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind and that one prize should go to "the person who shall have produced in the field of literature the most outstanding work of an idealistic tendency" were almost recipes for controversy in the awarding bodies and in wider circles. His commendable wish that "no consideration whatever shall be given to the nationality of the candidates" was not universally applied in

Sweden, where it was thought by some to be unpatriotic. And his decision that a prize for "champions of peace" should be awarded by a Committee of the Norwegian Storting caused some unease, because there was tension between Sweden and Norway, whose Union was soon to be dissolved.

All this, together with the attitude of members of the Nobel family, with problems arising from the spread of Alfred Nobel's assets among nine European countries and the uncertainty of his legal domicile, caused some reluctance on the part of the Swedish Academy of Sciences, the Caroline Institute and the Swedish Academy to accept the responsibility that had been laid upon them for awarding prizes in chemistry, physics, medicine and literature.

The will is understandable in terms of the different facets of the testator's character. The Nobel family came of Swedish peasant stock and took its name from the commune of Nöbbelö. It produced several members of unusual ability and initiative. Emmanuel Nobel, Alfred's father, had found it difficult to make his way in Sweden and emigrated to Finland in 1837 and then to St Petersburg. He returned after twenty years, leaving his eldest sons,

Robert and Ludwig, in Russia. Before this, Alfred had become a cosmopolitan, an idealist and a self-educated chemist. He was said to find pleasure in Shelley and the Norwegian poets; and he was about to be the inventor of dynamite and new detonators, and to become an industrialist of major importance.

Nobel never married, suffered at times from melancholia, and once wrote to a lady: "Cupid's arrows have been inadequately replaced by cannon." But, in addition to his mother, at least two women, both Viennese, had a significant place in his life. With one, the young and light-headed Sofie Hess, who had worked in a florist's shop, the relationship began as an infatuation but later became a liability when she posed as Madame Nobel. The other, Bertha Sophie Felicitas, Countess Kinsky von Chinic und Tettau, who later became Baroness von Suttner, was a beautiful but impoverished woman of culture. For a brief period she was Nobel's secretary in Paris, but during his absence she returned to Vienna to a secret marriage.

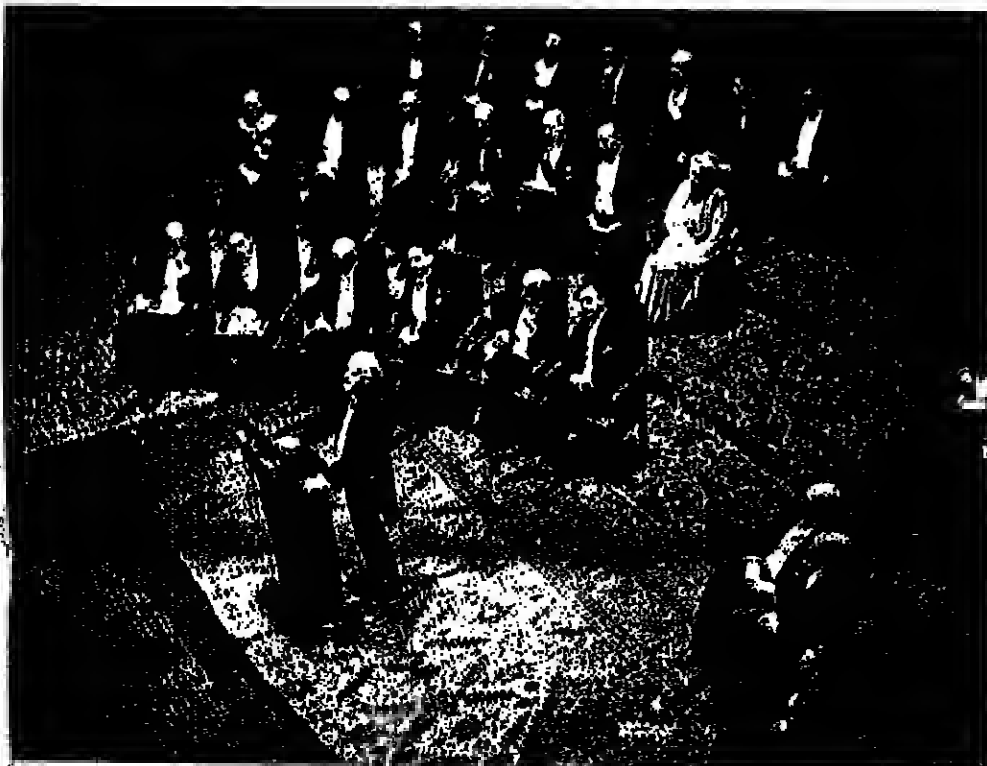
Nevertheless, Bertha von Suttner and Nobel remained warm friends. She became a dedicated worker for peace and in 1905 was

awarded a Nobel Prize. There can be little doubt that their friendship had some influence on Nobel's decision in 1893 to endow a peace prize, but they did not seem to agree on how a permanent state of peace was most likely to be achieved and their differing views bring to mind some of those voiced today. Nobel's idealism was diluted with realism. He wrote to her: "My factories may end war sooner than your Congresses. The day when two army corps will be able to destroy each other in one second all civilized nations will recoil with horror and dishonour their arms." He thought of a league of nations prepared to use force. About her idea of a specialist newspaper for peace propaganda he wrote: "I might as well throw my money out of the window."

Nobel's decision to distribute only a small proportion of his fortune among relatives and friends was entirely consistent with his views on inheritance. With reference to children, he said: "It is a mistake to hand over to them considerable sums of money beyond what is necessary for their education. To do so encourages laziness and impedes the healthy capacity of the individual to make an independent position for himself." Not surprisingly, the effect of these sentiments was unwelcome to members of the Nobel family. A threat to contest the will and fear that the estate might become subject to the jurisdiction of a French court, impelled Sohlman hurriedly to transfer Nobel's bank deposits in Paris to London and Stockholm, carrying them to the Gare du Nord in a home-cab with a drawn revolver to ward off robbers. More than a year passed before negotiations with the family were brought to a satisfactory conclusion and the way to the implementation of the will was open.

Sohlman's friendship with Alfred Nobel and his involvement in the implementation of the will gives his book a permanent historical value. For those who would want a brief account of the Nobel story almost to the present day, presented in a more popular format and accompanied by an occasional amusing anecdote and many coloured photographs, there is Peter Wilhelm's *The Nobel Prize*.

Nobel's fortune, though large, was not immense, and in restricting a benefaction to the award of a limited number of substantial prizes he made it a focus of public interest. One thing is certain: despite the early complaints that he had shown lack of patriotism and placed a heavy and inappropriate burden on the Swedish academies, his gift has been good for Sweden.



Alfred Ehrenstam's photograph of the Nobel Prize ceremony in Stockholm in 1929. Thomas Mann is on the extreme right in the first row behind the speaker.

Jumping to conceptions

J. Bruce Brackenridge

R. ARIS, H.T. DAVIS and R.H. STUEVER
(Editors)
Spring of Scientific Creativity: Essays on founders of modern science.
342pp. University of Minnesota Press. \$32.50.
08166 10878

As a seventeenth-century proponent of the empirical method, Sir Francis Bacon would have been taken aback by the thought of "scientific creativity". For him, the rules of the game required a strictly objective collecting of a huge amount of neutral data from which would automatically emerge the laws of nature, like Athena emerging fully grown from the head of Zeus. In the twentieth century, the mathematician and cultural commentator, Jacob Bronowski, has credited the inventor of a scientific theory with the same degree of creativity as one would accord the author of a play. Between these two views, the preface to this work claims, lies "a wealth, not to say welter, of insights" into the subject of creativity and scientific progress. Arthur Koestler's analogy with humor, Roger Hanson's "Creative Conception", Sir Karl Popper's "Falsification Verification" and even Thomas Kuhn's "Creative Conception" are paradigms for which "scientific fact and theory are not categorically separable".

To escape from, or perhaps to rise above, such a welter of philosophical creativity concerning scientific creativity, the editors of this collection propose "a refreshing way to approach this question would be a biographical

look at a selection of scientists and mathematicians". Their expressed hope and expectation is that these dozen essays "will lead to further insight into the creative springs of the scientific enterprise".

The essays were originally presented as a series of lectures at the University of Minnesota and then rewritten for publication. They appear in chronological order of subject-matter, beginning with Galileo and ending with John von Neumann and computers. They range in length from fifteen pages to seventy-one, the shortest being devoted to a comparison of the creative style of Blaise Pascal to a "hard-nosed American inventor", with that of Thomas Mann's Adrian Leverkühn, a fictional German composer driven to insanity by syphilis, the longest biography of James Clerk Maxwell, which includes such details as his seventeenth-century forebear who "was sent down (from Glasgow University) for an antipathy with a servant girl". The rest of the essays are all about twenty-five pages in length, but they vary widely in quality. The best speak directly to scientific creativity and offer the reflections of leading scholars on the subjects of their prime interest, e.g. Richard S. Westfall on Sir Isaac Newton, Martin J. Klein on Josiah Willard Gibbs, and Stanley Goldberg on Albert Einstein. At the other end of the spectrum, one finds a rambling reminiscence of von Neumann's work at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton during the 1940s, replete with all the little anecdotes that abound in bad biographies and offering nothing by way of insight into von Neumann's creativity.

Even in the best essays there is no consensus concerning creativity. As Westfall notes, it is appropriate that the title should have the plural "springs" and not the restrictive singular "spring", for the sources of scientific creativity as revealed by these essays are quite diverse.

The opening essay by Thomas B. Settle on Galileo and his early experiments with falling bodies does not discuss the "Leaning Tower of Pisa Effect" (heavy and light bodies fall to the ground in the same time), but rather what the author calls the "Galileo Effect" (Galileo's claim that when light and heavy objects are dropped simultaneously, the light one initially moves ahead of the heavy object but that the latter eventually overtakes the former). After an interesting but tangential report on the author's own current research into physiological causes for such an effect, he concludes that Galileo's "considerable talent for empirical research" and the persistence with which he perfected it "were at the core of his productive scientific life".

In contrast, Westfall concentrates on a specific topic, the "creative leap" made by Newton between Halley's visit to him in August 1684, which provided the impetus to return to his work on planetary motion, and the completion of the *Principia* in 1687. "It is a compelling story of creative genius at work, constantly expanding his conception of the work in which he was engaged." Westfall never loses track of his mission as he skillfully guides us through the maze of Newton's creation of the monumental generalization of the concept of universal gravitation. He concludes, however, that it is a tale

without equal because of Newton's sheer genius. Nevertheless, Westfall claims for Newton, as Settle does for Galileo, "that what made his genius productive was a rare capacity for sustained concentration".

The essays on James Prescott Joule (1818-89) and James Clerk Maxwell (1831-79) also offer interesting similarities and contrasts. The former is remembered for his experimental work and the latter for his theoretical work. One is described as "a private man", the other as "a quiet and rather silent man". Joule's correspondence is described as "entirely innocent of references to philosophical issues, whether relative to science or not", while with Maxwell it is just the reverse: "The more one reads of Maxwell the clearer it becomes how philosophical convictions that he reached early in his career influenced and fructified his scientific ideas." On a much less relevant issue, both essays make specific reference to the nineteenth-century use of the word *physicist* as it relates to their subject: both describe it as having been "coined by William Whewell in 1840". In the final analysis, this common description alone links the disparate creative contributions of the two men.

Without imposing any rigid definition of creative "springs", the editors thus allow one to peruse the various essays according to taste (remarkably, there are no women included). The value of this collection is in the splendid glimpses it gives into the creativity of a Newton or an Einstein, and for these moments it must be praised. For the most part, however, the elusive springs of creativity of the individual scientist remain hidden.

Observing the conventions

Michael Slote

STUART HAMPSHIRE
Morality and Conflict
175pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £15.
0631 13364

It is useful to have the essays of *Morality and Conflict*—all but one of which have appeared in some form previously—collected in one volume. If current moral philosophy seems to have emerged from an earlier strait-jacket of semantic and epistemological preoccupations, some of the credit undoubtedly lies with Sir Stuart Hampshire; and the present collection exhibits a concern to relate moral philosophy to a realistic moral psychology and a larger philosophy of individual human life that have long been characteristic of Hampshire's work. But his most distinctive contribution emerges from a relatively new emphasis, in the introduction and the final two chapters, on the moral significance of social conventions.

In some areas of morality we hope for a convergence of evaluations: to the extent that we accept a given principle of justice, for example, we are inclined to affirm its validity for other societies where it may not in fact be recognized. But Hampshire believes that such cross-cultural moral standards (or aspirations) do not exhaust our moral sensibility. Contrary to most current philosophical opinion, he holds that some moral values need not be and in fact are not treated as having cross-cultural validity. Although certain moral standards having to do, among other things, with the family, friendship and sexual behaviour are constrained by general considerations of justice and human welfare, they cannot be justified in general terms, but require, he says, a distinctive kind of holistic/historical justification that underlines their variability, their conventional nature. Consider, for example, our own attitudes to certain prohibitions concerning the "disposal" of the dead. We feel a deep repugnance at the idea of violating these prohibitions, but, in contrast to our feelings about maiming and killing, we do not, it seems, insist that people in other societies are necessarily wrong; if their conventions for treating the dead conflict with our own. Yet our lack of repugnance at other people's conventions does not make us reject our own conventional prohibitions as

superstitious, gratuitous, or less than morally binding upon us.

Hampshire makes a strong case for the existence of culturally variable standards as part of our ordinary moral thought about the world, and he also offers a number of possible justifications for such standards. In different places he appeals to loyalty to one's past, to the need for a sense of identity and to the value of culturally distinctive ways of life as possible justifications for particular social or cultural conventions. But some of these justifications (or can take) a consequentialist form, and for that very reason threaten to undercut the attitude of those, for example, who treat prohibitions against certain ways of treating the dead as *prohibitions*. (If such prohibitions are justified by their tendency to preserve a valuable way of life, why shouldn't we disregard them whenever doing so would marginally contribute to preserving that way of life or the prohibitions themselves?) On the other hand, Hampshire's appeal to loyalty threatens the distinctiveness of culturally variable conventional prohibitions by relating them to a universally applicable moral standard. (The appeal to the agent's sense of his identity seems to face both these problems.) At one point Hampshire seems willing to allow that conventional prohibitions are justifiable in the same terms as other moral claims, but that in this area we run out of precise rational argument a good deal sooner than we do in arguing about justice and human welfare. This, again, would make conventional moral standards appear far less distinctive than Hampshire at other times might wish us to believe, but at the very least the discussion forces us to take conventional moral values seriously and raises important issues about how such values are to be justified or explained.

Hampshire's views about conventional moral standards also represent part of a continuing critique of those moral philosophies, among them utilitarianism, which he believes oversimplify the moral life; and an extended argument against utilitarianism in particular runs through several of the essays of *Morality and Conflict*. The considerations brought to bear against it are rich and varied; but sometimes difficult to evaluate. Hampshire criticizes utilitarianism for leading those who accept and follow it to a less interesting, less creative form of existence, but he does not explicitly mention

those utilitarians who hold that there may well be good utilitarian reasons for people not to guide their lives by utilitarian morality and it is not clear how Hampshire could effectively reply to this position. (It is not enough to say that any valid criterion of right and wrong action must have a practical function, for that is precisely what many contemporary utilitarians, and others, would wish to question.) Hampshire also criticizes utilitarianism for being too simple a theory, but present-day (act-)utilitarianism, with its different levels of moral thinking and its different objects of consequentialist evaluation, is in fact a highly complex theory, and, again, partly because he does not cite the recent literature, it is not clear how successful Hampshire's line of criticism really is.

Morality and Conflict discusses a wide variety of other topics. Chapter Two, for example, contains a penetrating discussion of the contrasting aims and moral methodologies of Aristotle and Spinoza; Chapter Three usefully connects individual and political morality; and the final, title chapter not only defends the idea of conventional, socially variable moral claims, but also argues that the richness of particular conventions exacerbates the conflict that any individual will face within a given society or culture. Sir Isaiah Berlin and others have questioned the ideal of "the good life" by pointing out the impossibility of realizing all the virtues and values we honour within a single lifetime. (Even a so-called balanced life will miss out on virtues and goods that can only be achieved by intensely concentrating on some things to the exclusion of others. There is no way to avoid specialization.) But these previous discussions have focused on the inevitable loss or failure of values founded in general human nature, and Hampshire seeks to reinforce this sense of unavoidable conflict and loss by pointing out the existence of conventional values whose realization is restricted to those who participate in a given way of life. If, as Hampshire believes, there are limits to the number and variety of conventions the particular individual can participate in at any given time or throughout a lifetime, then we are inevitably limited not only in our achievement of basic human values but, also in the realization of conventional-dependent cultural and social goods. It will be interesting to see how moral philosophers respond to Hampshire's subtle and many-sided treatment of this topic.

Channel crossing

Peregrine Horden

ALAN MONTEFIORE (Editor)
Philosophy in France Today
272pp. Cambridge University Press. £20.
(paperback £5.95).
0521 256730

"Continental philosophy" is an invention: a technique, rather like the Orientalism denounced by Edward Said, for lumping together and excluding systems of thought we do not care to understand. It was invented when Russell add Moore repudiated Hegel and the Channel was covered by a transcendental fog. The "analytic" or "logical empiricist" philosophy since developed in England and America has identified a few European kindred spirits—Wittgenstein and Frege, of course; also Brandom, Meinong, Popper and the Vienna Circle. But the distinction Wittgenstein drew, in the *Philosophical Remarks* of 1930, between that philosophy which builds ever larger, more complex (ie, nebulous) structures and the English strain which humbly strives for clarity and perspicuity, has remained broadly convincing to orthodox analytic eyes.

Successes might engender, a number of heroic mediators—Charles Taylor, Richard Rorty, Jean Ricœur and Alan Montefiore among them—are attempting to make the insights of the major European philosophical schools analytically intelligible and compelling. The collection now edited by Montefiore

admirably complements Vincent Descombes's prospectus of *Modern French Philosophy*, and has the merit of allowing the philosophers to speak for themselves. Some of them find this freedom distinctly embarrassing. The editor's request that they describe the nature of their work with an English audience in mind produces several assertions of inability to say what philosophy is, or even how their work is to be recognized as "their own", as well as some apocalyptic pronouncements on philosophy's future. Comparatively few take the opportunity to reproduce work in progress. In their evasiveness however, they tell us a good deal about the nature of a discipline which still takes seriously the "purely" transcendental problems of the Kantian subject, and yet which is also deeply reluctant to acknowledge any decisive boundary between its own discourse and those of history, politics and literature.

This tends to confirm Descombes's report, that the generation known after 1945 as that of the "three H's" (Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger) has yielded dominance to the generation known since 1960 as that of the three "masters of suspicion"—Marx, Freud and Nietzsche. Yet it would be wrong to suppose that French philosophy has lost all confidence in philosophical method, and necessarily collapses into socialism, psychoanalysis or deconstruction. Indeed, so far as deconstruction is concerned, the second merit of this collection is to shift the emphasis away from Derrida. The current master of those who suspect, (Derrida's work does not, after all, lack English translation or exegetical aid), and his formal defence of his *différance*, which he is represented here, shows something of his past alienation from the philosophical scene.

The collection is thus more than another

diatribe against the "metaphysics of presence". For all their anguish about the nature and purpose of philosophy—an anguish which is, overall, probably less extreme than Wittgenstein's—the contributors nevertheless succeed in conveying the vigour and prodigality of recent French philosophy. Inevitably, a certain amount of what they say would not be admitted as genuinely philosophical in an analytic debate. There are several pieces of generalized sociological theory: Pierre Bourdieu, Descombes and Pierre Macherey—all in a Rorty-esque vein—on the institutions of philosophy itself; Louis Marin—turning back to Pascal—on justice, force, and their respective discourses. But there are also several contributions—by Ricœur, Emmanuel Levinas, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Jean-François Lyotard—which explicitly derive their orientation from the strategies of phenomenology and hermeneutics. Finally, there are two relative "loners": Jean-Toussaint Desanti reports on his philosophy of mathematics; Jacques Bouveresse, the doyen of French analytic philosophers, scorns the obscurantist waffle produced by his contemporaries and looks to Frege for solace.

In that Bouveresse is both unfair and untypical: unfair, because in comparison with Derrida most of the contributors are paragons of lucidity; and untypical, not because of his negligence, but because he actually debates with his colleagues. The others tend to continue with their great predecessors, from Aristotle to Merleau-Ponty, and they would normally do so at book length ("as soon as there is one sentence, there are several", Lyotard reminds us), not, as here, in pieces short enough for *The Journal of Philosophy*. That aside, it is hard to see that the collection could have been better conceived or executed.



CROOM HELM

MONOPOLISTS AND FREEBOOTERS

O. Spate
This book continues the author's history of the Pacific since Magellan, which began with his work *The Spanish Lake*.

£6.1t is Professor Spate's incurable romanticism that sustains him in his daunting task and gives grandeur to his work.??

Raymond Carr TLS
£29.50 0-7099-2371-6 432 pages 1983

THE VICTORIANS AND THEIR FLOWERS

N. Scourie
This well-researched book shows how those other Victorian values of thrift, scientific discovery and endless curiosity impinged on the world of gardening.??

Red Whiteray Daily Telegraph
£12.95 0-7099-2377-5 195 pages 1983

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE: Reputation and Power

P. B. Smith
New in Paperback
This first thing to be said is that this is a brilliant polemic... It is probable—indeed it is devoutly to be wished—that no other of our sanctified national images will receive the devastating treatment meted out here to Miss Nightingale.??

Richard Sherrin, TLS
£14.95 hbk 0-7099-2314-7 224 pages
£6.95 pbk 0-7099-3320-7

LITERARY CRITICS AND REVIEWERS IN EARLY 19TH CENTURY BRITAIN

P. Morgan
The book deals with major critics of the first half of the nineteenth century in Britain who contributed to the chief quarterly: *Edinburgh Review*, *Quarterly Review*, and *Westminster Review*. Among the regular contributors to these reviews were major writers like Carlyle, Macaulay, Scott, Southey and Mill. By examining the work of each writer the author conveys a sense of the richness and variety of the field.
£14.95 0-7099-1774-0 208 pages 1983

THE FALLEN WOMAN IN THE 19TH CENTURY ENGLISH NOVEL

G. Watt
Now seen as in many ways a hypothetical stance, the ideology of 'fallenness' provides a means of articulating many of the social and moral concerns of the nineteenth-century novelists. This book studies the ways in which the theme was treated by individual authors, and the setting in which they were writing.
£15.95 0-7099-2781-9 240 pages January 1984

THE MAJOR POETRY OF LERMONTOV

Translated by Anatoly Liberman
Many of Liberman's translations seem to me very beautiful... Liberman has great feeling for the poet and a literary insight. I doubt if there are better translations of Lermontov.??
C.P. Snow
Prov £27.50 0-7099-1618-3 320 pages February 1984 80 illustrations

Croom Helm Ltd,
Provident House, Burrell Row,
Beckenham, Kent BR3 1AT.

Behind the lines

Robert Hewison

When is a Minimum Terms Agreement not a Minimum Terms Agreement? Apparently when it is made by BBC Publications. For more than two years the Society of Authors and the Writers' Guild have been pressing their campaign to establish certain minimum terms and conditions for contracts between writers and publishers. Since the Publishers' Association declines to represent its members in this matter, the writers' organizations have undertaken the gruelling task of trying to persuade each publishing house individually to agree to minimum terms for their authors. W. H. Allen, with its paperback subsidiary Stur Books, has signed such an agreement; as has Hamish Hamilton. From February 1 authors offered contracts by BBC Publications will find that clauses have been inserted which establish minimum criteria — terms which can of course be improved by them or their agents if they have the negotiating power.

Nevertheless, Michael Tree, Deputy Managing Director of BBC Publications, and the executive most concerned with the new deal, is adamant that "we definitely have not signed a Minimum Terms Agreement. What we have done is agree to amend our existing contracts in the light of discussions with the Society of Authors and the Writers' Guild." Though reluctant to be caught in a wrangle over semantics, Mark Le Fanu, General Secretary of the Society of Authors, states "we regard this as an agreement giving new minimum terms". Walter Jeffrey, General Secretary of the Writers' Guild, says "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet".

However arrived at, the "amendments" to the BBC Publications contract involve changes that add up to virtually a new agreement. Previously, standard BBC Publications contracts left blank such vital details as the amount of advance to be paid; what the precise royalty was; and how the earnings from subsequent sales were to be divided. The new agreement allows for a minimum royalty of 10 per cent, and there is a revolutionary formula for calculating the sum to be paid in advance as a percentage of the first printing. New to the BBC's contract, and as far as I know to current publishing practice, is the limitation of the publisher's licence of the author's copyright to twenty years. Normally, the author assigns copyright for the full term, provided the book remains in print. Although the BBC does have a means of renewal after twenty years in certain circumstances, the writers regard the shortening of this licence as a major achievement.

Although you might not believe it when you have to listen to them, writers grouse about other things besides money, and the new not-a-minimum-terms contract should remove many of the sources of authors' paranoia. For one thing, BBC Publications must tell the author how many copies are being printed, something that is normally very hard to discover; even after the most persistent questioning. The author will have a proper say in the design and editing of the book (the unattended contract appears to give *carte blanche* to editing without consultation). There is a clear explanation of what "out of print" means.

For its part, although the BBC will not even admit that it was holding negotiations, it only refers to "discussions". The Corporation has won an agreement that makes full allowance for the peculiar nature of its operation. Certain categories of books are excluded, including educational books originated by BBC Schools and Continuing Education Departments. Although they are now committed to certain minimum financial terms, they are not particularly severe.

Mark Le Fanu of the Society of Authors believes that the essence of BBC Publications' new contract stems from the fact that since the writers' organizations announced their campaign both to improve and regularize working conditions for writers, "the phrase Minimum Terms Agreement has become a bogey word for publishers". Clive Bradley, chief executive of the Publishers' Association, was suitably neutral about the BBC's new deal. "It is not up to us to like it or dislike it, or otherwise. We have to accept it as a fait accompli."

ter for individual publishers, according to their own operations." He did, however, add that "there are parts of the Minimum Terms Agreement which I think publishers would be ill-advised to sign".

The Writers' Guild and the Society of Authors are delighted with the new deal, which took two years of hard bargaining (and the occasional threat of supportive action by BBC television writers) to achieve. They are now pressing on with talks with two other major publishing houses. At the same time they are beginning earnestly to consider a merger between their two organizations.

* * *

I came across this intriguing piece of Doublethink in the latest number of *Book Marketing News*. "The Board of the Edinburgh Book Festival has decided that, if, as they intend, the next Book Festival is to be even more successful than the 1983 event, the time factor is too short to plan for next year. So there will be no Book Festival in 1984 . . .".

* * *

If at the mention of contracts your eyes glaze over, then you will slump insensate at the mention of copyright. But since copyright is the source of economic order not only in literature but in all the arts (just as patents protect scientific creativity) we would be wise to take more interest in this fiendishly complex subject.

The Copyright Act of 1956, the main source of regulation in this country, is rapidly becoming obsolete as its clauses are rendered inoperative by the development of new technologies and the very basis of its design is called into question by the need to "harmonize" British law with that of Europe. The present government is clearly reluctant to undertake the work of reform, partly because of the arduous complication, and partly because it appears so boring that there are no votes in it. The report of the Whitford Committee on copyright reform has been gathering dust since 1977, a dust only lightly disturbed by the flustering of a government Green Paper in 1981, which ignored some of Whitford's best recommendations.

While we wait for much-needed reform, all sorts of ideas are being brought forward as to what the new law should be. A proposal has been made by the Directors' Guild which will alarm all writers for theatre, film and television, a proposal which according to that champion of authors' rights, Fay Weldon, means that writers "must declare war on their directors". What has happened is that the Directors' Guild has taken the *auteur* theory to its logical conclusion. They argue that the director, and not the writer, is the true creator of the play, programme or film.

The Directors' Guild was formed only in October 1982, and is not to be confused with the Association of Directors and Producers. (Directors have declared their own war on producers, and vice versa.) It has just over 500 members, and includes some prestigious names, among them Sir Peter Hall, Trevor Nunn, Alan Parker. What it suggests is that there should be a "Directors' Copyright" which defines the rights of directors "as authors of productions of all kinds in all media".

They base their case on a mixture of common practice and present law. As films stand, mime artists, choreographers and set designers have copyright, but directors do not. In television, residual payments are already being made to free-lance directors. They understand from the Patents Office that if they can produce written evidence of their creativity, production notes, storyboards, etc., they may have a copyright claim. In Europe the existence of the *droit moral* may give them some rights; and in West Germany television contracts now recognize the director as the author of the work.

The Directors' Guild is seeking to gain control over the presentation of its members' work, as much as greater rewards for its exploitation, but the recognition of a directors' copyright raises all sorts of imponderables. Could Sir Peter Hall copyright *Hamlet*? John Crome (who directed many episodes of *The Professionals*) is Chairman of the directors' Guild copyright committee. "We are not suggesting that we diminish the copyright of writers, even though at present the writer will have copyright in the final text of a production, even when that is the work of the director." Writers, however, might argue that if directors are to be rewarded for their say in the text, then writers must charge for their advice on casting, and indeed for the camera directions they write into their script.

The directors say that their work "is the essential element without which the other separate elements would not cohere into the produced work". Writers reply that the director cannot even begin without a script, and when the script is written by a director, then he is being a writer. In the world of film and television it is probable that the respective economic strengths of writer and director will decide where the money goes, but an editorial copyright of the kind envisaged has potential consequences for the written word, particularly now that authors' agents and fiction editors seem to be tackling an increasingly "creative" role.

The Directors' Guild is planning a campaign similar to that which secured Public Lending Right. The latest issue of the Guild's magazine *Direct* says they are drafting their own Bill "to be shepherded through the Lords by Ted Willis". If the Directors' Guild is to mount such a campaign, then it should begin by getting its facts straight. Lord Willis (Willis of "Dock Green") has long represented the interests of writers, not directors. When I asked him about the Guild's proposal he gave me a forthright reply:

I don't think there is any basis whatsoever for claiming directors' copyright. They work basically with other people's copyright material, and they get well paid for it. This is simply an extension of directors' vanity. I don't think it will be possible to establish directors' copyright in international law. Any suggestion that Lord Willis will be sponsoring a Bill in the House of Lords is utter nonsense. Time, it appears, for a rewrite.

* * *

The existence of copyright — and especially its continuance for fifty years after an author's death — can effect some extraordinary economic transformations. Who would have guessed that a musical adaptation of T. S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* would have such a healthy effect on the cash flow of Faber & Faber and the Eliot estate? A theatrical presentation of a rather different aspect of Eliot's life is, however, unlikely to please the Eliot Trustees: Michael Hastings's play about Eliot's first marriage, *Tom and Viv*, which opens next month at the Royal Court.

Michael Hastings has been fascinated by the subject of Eliot's marriage to Vivienne Haigh Wood ever since 1956, when at a party in New

York Edith Sitwell said to him: "At some time in their marriage Tom went mad, and promptly certified his wife." Edith Sitwell was technically wrong. In that by the time Vivienne was confined to the Northumberland House Nursing Home (where she died in 1947) the couple were legally separated, so his name does not appear on the certificate. But the play takes a clear line on whose decision it was.

Hastings argues that it is very difficult for scholars to study the details of Eliot's first marriage (in 1915), and says that it is getting harder. Known archives are kept closed and the Eliot Trustees acquire any documentary material that comes available. The projected collection of Eliot's letters, which would necessarily refer to the marriage, appears to have been indefinitely postponed. Hastings claims that for instance the disappearance of Eliot's dedication of *Ash Wednesday* "to my wife".

Hastings, however, did manage to find one "window" in the deepening obscurity closing around Eliot's first marriage. Over a period of five months in 1980 he interviewed Vivienne's brother Maurice Hoigh Wood. (It is his signature on the certification of Vivienne.) From this and other close witnesses, Michael Hastings has attempted, he says, to open some of the doors "which Eliot spent his life shutting behind him". Vivienne's incarceration is presented as the result of medical ignorance: Eliot appears to have married into an Edwardian sunset world which fascinated him, but with which, once Vivienne's erratic behaviour became clear, he was unable to cope. His fascist sympathies in the 1930s are played upon.

Michael Hastings admits that *Tom and Viv* "may be a play that will open more wounds than it can heal", but in opening them he hopes to cleanse them. He has written a play, and not a documentary, but his argument is that Eliot deliberately concealed an entire personal anguish, and transposed his subjective pain and fragmentation into the European fragmentations of *The Waste Land*. Vivienne was a central part of this experience, which has become inaccessible. Eliot may have promoted a critical method that discounted biography and emphasized objectivity, but really "Eliot is playing Possum with us".

Hastings has taken legal advice: all the characters in the play are dead, and there is no direct quotation, although there is a reconstruction of one of Eliot's obscene "King Bolo" limericks and of a fascist speech in the 1930s. It would be surprising, however, if *Tom and Viv* does not provoke a major controversy about the conflicting responsibilities of literary trustees — in this case Eliot's second wife, Valerie — towards the demands of scholarship and the preservation of a good name.

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Sir Edward Abraham was Professor of Chemical Pathology at the University of Oxford from 1964 to 1980.
Dr Bruce Brackenridge is Professor of Physics at Lawrence University, Wisconsin.
Graham Bradshaw is a lecturer in English at the University of St Andrews.
Victor Bulmer-Thomas is a lecturer in Development Economics at Queen Mary College, London.
Maureen Cain is the author of *Society and the Policeman's Role*, 1973.
Richard Fildes is editor of *The Author* and an associate editor of the *Observer*.
Peter Gay's *Freud, Jews and other Germans* was published in 1978.
Robert Hewison's *Mr. Anger: Culture in the cold war 1945-60*, was published in 1981.
Perceval Norton is editor of *The Novelist as Philosopher: the Chichester Lectures*, 1982.
Kenneth Kitchen is a Reader in Egyptology and Coptic at the University of Liverpool.
Kathleen Lennon is a lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Hull.
Sean MacCurtain is the author of *A History of English Prison Administration, Volume I 1750-1877*, 1981.
John McIlchrist is the author of *Against Criticism*, 1982.
Stephen Medcalf is a Reader in English at the University of Sussex.
Blake Morrison is Deputy Literary Editor of the *Observer*.
Virgil Nemoianu teaches Comparative Literature at the Catholic University of America.
Peter Oppenheimer is a Student of Christ Church, Oxford.
S. S. Praveen's most recent book, *Hindu's Jewish Comedy*, was published last year.
E. R. Rieu is a Research Fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford.
Lord Roll is the author of *A History of Economic Thought*, 1973.
Alan Ryan teaches politics at New College, Oxford.
George Schoplin is a lecturer in East European Political Institutions at the London School of Economics and the School of Slavonic and East European Studies.
R. S. Shari is Senior Lecturer in the School of Modern Languages and European History at the University of East Anglia.
Michael Slope's books include *Metaphysics and Essence*, 1975.
Julian Symonds's most recent novel, *The Name of Annabel Lee*, was published last year.
D. C. Watt is Stevenson Professor of International History at the University of London.
T. P. Whitford's most recent book is *Chaos Comedies*, 1979.

Letters

Testing the Chains'

Sir, — The initial gratification that my book *Testing the Chains* was, seemingly, the subject of a full-page review in the *TLS* (December 23, 1983) soon faded when it was discovered that the alleged review was a self-indulgent conceit of the general topic by someone who, on the evidence of his piece, had hardly read the book.

Edward Kamau Brathwaite, as befits a distinguished black West Indian poet, writes eloquently about his own consciousness of slave resistance. In mid-course, he describes *Testing the Chains* as "on its own terms, careful and comprehensive", and in conclusion, almost posthumously, says that "for a sheer listing and account of (rather than an accounting for) the slave revolts and conspiracies within the British Caribbean, this will become a standard work".

Unfortunately, though, the effect of this faint praise is to convey the impression that *Testing the Chains* is simply a chronicle of British West Indian slave plots and rebellions, without analysis or even useful generalizations. More specifically, Brathwaite alleges two salient faults in the book: a lack of "discussion of slave culture within the context of their revolts", and a failure adequately to take into account the Haitian Revolution of 1791 to 1804. If Brathwaite merely argued that these aspects were underrated, or if he differed from what was specifically argued about them, we could have no complaint (his views, of course, are eminently worthy of respect). But it is grossly unfair for him to suggest almost complete lacunae.

Professor Brathwaite asserts that "we needed an account not only of slave potential — their human/cultural/material resources — but of planter potential as well — the kind of 'confrontation analysis' one would normally expect in an account, say, of the American Civil War, or Vietnam or the Falklands/Malvinas crisis". In so doing, he does not address the whole of Part One of a five-part book, four chapters of which deal in general with "the complex dialectic of plantation life", and what is specifically characterized as the ideology of slave resistance. Three of the chapters are even entitled, significantly, "Backra and Neger", "Making a Life of their Own", and "Quashia as Haro".

Likewise, it is a distortion for Brathwaite to assert "the absence of any treatment of the revolution in Haiti" on account of academic scruple (since the book deals with the British West Indies alone). Naturally, a detailed account of that stupendous revolt is not given — it requires a whole book in itself — but its effects on the patterns of slave resistance in the British colonies, on slave attitudes and tactics, and on the responses of the white-master class, are fully considered, both in general in the preface and the chapter which begins Part Four, and more particularly when dealing with all the outbreaks in the British colonies between 1791 and 1816.

Professor Brathwaite lists most of these outbreaks (with at least one error — writing Surinam, 1795, instead of Demerara), but simply dashes them together as "unrest directly sparked by news of Haiti". All, allegedly, also "involved three elements which we begin to focus on more clearly when we use Haiti as exemplar: the role of maroons, the role of black soldiers, the role of Afro-Caribbean religion as both motivation and weapon". Had he actually addressed my detailed accounts of each outbreak, he would have found it much more difficult to make such blanket assertions.

Far from being exclusively African in character, at least two of Brathwaite's listed revolts were led by white or free coloured French revolutionaries (inspired, incidentally, by way of Martinique and Guadeloupe, not Haiti), and one spearheaded by Black Caribs traditionally inimical to slaves. The assertion about Afro-Caribbean religion, where not clearly in error, would be extremely difficult to prove. Besides, a priori "careful and comprehensive" study would force Brathwaite to come to terms with the difficult fact that more slaves and maroons fought for the British master class than against them in the wars that stemmed from the French and Haitian revolutions.

Clearly, Professor Brathwaite and I would differ substantially in any public debate on the question of slave resistance. But a public dialogue would be infinitely fairer and, I dare say, more valuable, than the present case: a private yelp of complaint against a privileged treatment that is partial in a double sense.

In closing, I would like to point out a minor but annoying misprint. In the publication details, the book is said to contain not 389 but 38 pages. At a time when the cost of American books in England is approaching pound-for-pound (in this case, £25 for \$29.50) we may not be too far removed from a time when a cost of 66p a page (rather than merely the cost of duplicating) may go unremarked!

MICHAEL CRATON.
Department of History, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

Learned Journals

Sir, — C. E. Joel (Letters, January 13) is quite right in suspecting that O.G.S. Crawford's *The Eye Goddess* would have received short shrift under my dispensation as Editor of *Antiquity*. I wrote to that great man at the time inquiring how he could have written such a travesty of archaeology and anthropology, listing ten obvious errors and asking how this could have happened. I had back a one-line postcard saying, "Just FBI my dear boy". Alas, Mr Joel has for long suffered from just that complaint which attacked dear Crawford at the end of his life, pure bubble ignorance.

GLYN DANIEL.
St John's College, Cambridge.

Cole Porter

Sir, — Without disagreeing with Russell Davies's favourable opinion (January 13) of Fred Astaire ("a conversational delivery-man"), I would like to suggest that for certain of Cole Porter's songs the best interpreter was the Negro night-club singer "Hutch" (Leslie A. Hutchinson). Pieces like "I'm a Gigolo" are quintessentially night-club songs. Hutch did these very well ("Let's Do It" included) but he could also give the whole flavour of the ballads ("What Is This Thing Called Love?" for instance). His recording of the latter, with its long piano introduction, is quite outstanding.

Porter's own 78 of "You're The Top" and "Anything Goes" is night-club style and interesting, effective but not very beautiful.
GAVIN EWART.
57 Kenilworth Court, Lower Richmond Road, London SW15.

The Texts of 'King Lear'

Sir, — In reviewing Volume 1 of *The Texts of 'King Lear' and their Origins* (December 9, 1983), Richard Proudfoot notes my preoccupation with the "accumulation of . . . facts". I hope, therefore, that he will understand my wish to comment on a few factual errors — of both his and my own.

My reconstruction of the printing of the first quarto shows four (not three) passages in sheets H-L set by a second compositor, the first three (not two) from a separate typeset. Each "case y" passage was set simultaneously to jump them together as "unrest directly sparked by news of Haiti". All, allegedly, also "involved three elements which we begin to focus on more clearly when we use Haiti as exemplar: the role of maroons, the role of black soldiers, the role of Afro-Caribbean religion as both motivation and weapon". Had he actually addressed my detailed accounts of each outbreak, he would have found it much more difficult to make such blanket assertions.

Far from being exclusively African in character, at least two of Brathwaite's listed revolts were led by white or free coloured French revolutionaries (inspired, incidentally, by way of Martinique and Guadeloupe, not Haiti), and one spearheaded by Black Caribs traditionally inimical to slaves. The assertion about Afro-Caribbean religion, where not clearly in error, would be extremely difficult to prove. Besides, a priori "careful and comprehensive" study would force Brathwaite to come to terms with the difficult fact that more slaves and maroons fought for the British master class than against them in the wars that stemmed from the French and Haitian revolutions.

logue would be infinitely fairer and, I dare say, more valuable, than the present case: a private yelp of complaint against a privileged treatment that is partial in a double sense.

In closing, I would like to point out a minor but annoying misprint. In the publication details, the book is said to contain not 389 but 38 pages. At a time when the cost of American books in England is approaching pound-for-pound (in this case, £25 for \$29.50) we may not be too far removed from a time when a cost of 66p a page (rather than merely the cost of duplicating) may go unremarked!

MICHAEL CRATON.
Department of History, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

Learned Journals

Sir, — C. E. Joel (Letters, January 13) is quite right in suspecting that O.G.S. Crawford's *The Eye Goddess* would have received short shrift under my dispensation as Editor of *Antiquity*. I wrote to that great man at the time inquiring how he could have written such a travesty of archaeology and anthropology, listing ten obvious errors and asking how this could have happened. I had back a one-line postcard saying, "Just FBI my dear boy". Alas, Mr Joel has for long suffered from just that complaint which attacked dear Crawford at the end of his life, pure bubble ignorance.

GLYN DANIEL.
St John's College, Cambridge.

Cole Porter

Sir, — Without disagreeing with Russell Davies's favourable opinion (January 13) of Fred Astaire ("a conversational delivery-man"), I would like to suggest that for certain of Cole Porter's songs the best interpreter was the Negro night-club singer "Hutch" (Leslie A. Hutchinson). Pieces like "I'm a Gigolo" are quintessentially night-club songs. Hutch did these very well ("Let's Do It" included) but he could also give the whole flavour of the ballads ("What Is This Thing Called Love?" for instance). His recording of the latter, with its long piano introduction, is quite outstanding.

Porter's own 78 of "You're The Top" and "Anything Goes" is night-club style and interesting, effective but not very beautiful.
GAVIN EWART.
57 Kenilworth Court, Lower Richmond Road, London SW15.

The Texts of 'King Lear'

Sir, — In reviewing Volume 1 of *The Texts of 'King Lear' and their Origins* (December 9, 1983), Richard Proudfoot notes my preoccupation with the "accumulation of . . . facts". I hope, therefore, that he will understand my wish to comment on a few factual errors — of both his and my own.

My reconstruction of the printing of the first quarto shows four (not three) passages in sheets H-L set by a second compositor, the first three (not two) from a separate typeset. Each "case y" passage was set simultaneously to jump them together as "unrest directly sparked by news of Haiti". All, allegedly, also "involved three elements which we begin to focus on more clearly when we use Haiti as exemplar: the role of maroons, the role of black soldiers, the role of Afro-Caribbean religion as both motivation and weapon". Had he actually addressed my detailed accounts of each outbreak, he would have found it much more difficult to make such blanket assertions.

Far from being exclusively African in character, at least two of Brathwaite's listed revolts were led by white or free coloured French revolutionaries (inspired, incidentally, by way of Martinique and Guadeloupe, not Haiti), and one spearheaded by Black Caribs traditionally inimical to slaves. The assertion about Afro-Caribbean religion, where not clearly in error, would be extremely difficult to prove. Besides, a priori "careful and comprehensive" study would force Brathwaite to come to terms with the difficult fact that more slaves and maroons fought for the British master class than against them in the wars that stemmed from the French and Haitian revolutions.

Books from Oxford: Economics & Social Science

Economies of Scale, Competitiveness and Trade Patterns within the European Community

Nicholas Owen

This book is a major contribution to the debate on the pros and cons of the EEC. It investigates whether there has been more competition within the EEC; whether this has affected the structure of industries; and whether there have been benefits. £20 Clarendon Press

Poverty and Incentives The Economics of Social Security

Richard Hemming

Assesses the performance of the British social security system and begins by specifying the objectives of social security and describing the system which has emerged to meet them. Possible reforms are discussed, and the book poses such fundamental questions as: What is the future of national insurance? £15 paperback £5.95

The State of the World's Children 1983-84

UNICEF

In recent years the annual message from the Executive Director of UNICEF has become the most widely read and written about of all the UN reports on world development. This year's report continues to stress the importance of growth, health, and immunization. £9.95 paperback £3.50 OUP/UNICEF

The Wounded Soldiers of Industry Industrial Compensation Policy, 1833-1897

P. W. J. Bartrip and S. B. Burman

Describes and analyses the process whereby Britain moved from being a society bereft of industrial safety legislation, to one in which a multitude of laws sought to protect the workforce from accident. £15 Oxford Socio-Legal Studies Clarendon Press

Readings in Marxist Sociology

Edited by Tom Bottomore and Patrick Goode

This is the first book of readings on Marxist sociology to be published in English, and it makes available a wide variety of Marxist texts. Substantial excerpts from the works of major Marxist thinkers, beginning with Marx and Engels themselves, are systematically arranged to show the Marxist contribution to some of the principal fields of sociological inquiry. £14 paperback £8.95 Clarendon Press

United States Public Policy

A Geographical View

John W. House

In this pioneering text, a model of the policy process is presented and related to a number of thematic studies covering: area and regional development; social problems and policies; government policy and industrial location; and the impact of Federal policy upon urban form. £17.50 paperback £8.95 Clarendon Press

Oxford University Press

COMMENTARY

Fearfully exciting

Lucy Ellmann

The Omega Workshops, 1913-1919:
Decorative arts of Bloomsbury
Crafts Council, until March 18
The Omega Workshops: Alliance and Enmity
in English Art, 1911-1920
Anthony d'Offay, until March 6
JUDITH COLLINS
The Omega Workshops
310pp. Secker and Warburg. £15.95.
0436 105624

The Omega Workshops Ltd was formed in 1913 by Roger Fry further to promote the style he had recently christened Post-impressionism by applying it to interior decoration, and to provide an exciting new generation of artists with a little money. Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, Gaudier-Brzeska and Wyndham Lewis were among those who gathered at Fitzroy Square to produce murals, furniture, lampshades, parasols, candlesticks, dinner plates and so on.

The Omega personnel varied over the six years of its existence on account both of Fry's perceptive choice of new recruits and of occasional unpleasantnesses, such as what has come to be known as The Ideal Home Rumpus. This dispute between Fry and Wyndham Lewis over the Omega sitting-room display at the 1913 Ideal Home exhibition resulted in the departure of half the Omega's work-force, to become Vorticists, and the despatch of a nasty letter to Omega shareholders. The Omega survived this and the First World War, but by 1919 Bell and Grant had long since diverted their

decorative powers to Charleston, their Sussex farmhouse, and other good artists seem to have been scarce. Even Fry's enthusiasm for the enterprise in the end gave way to irritation and the Omega succumbed to its financial difficulties. A Bloomsbury interior would never again be so easily acquired.

From Vanessa Bell's letter to Fry in 1912 in which she vows to "paint stuffs etc. that won't be gay and pretty", one gathers that what they now appear pale and pleasant was uncompromisingly bold in Edwardian terms. But before adjusting our sensibility accordingly, it is worth noting that the work of Braque and Picasso of the same period has not taken on an equivalent meekness in its old age. Wyndham Lewis wrote in 1914 of Picasso's constructions: "With Picasso's revolution in the plastic arts, the figure of the Artist becomes still more blurred and uncertain. . . . Picasso has proved himself lately too amateurish a carpenter." Though tame revolutionaries by French standards, the Omega artists built up a certain reputation for rickety furniture and wonky vases themselves, and like Picasso their venture into decorative arts expanded artistic media. They enjoyed the comfortable muddle of amateurism - Fiona McCarthy's introduction in the Crafts Council catalogue includes an excerpt from a letter Fry wrote to Duncan Grant describing the initiation of himself and Vanessa Bell into the mysteries of pottery:

We went when the potter wasn't there and got the man to turn the wheel. It was fearfully exciting at first: the clay was too stiff and V. nearly burst with the effort to control its wobbliness. . . . It's fearfully exciting when you do get it centred and the stuff begins to come up between your fingers. V. never would make her penises long enough, which I



Two painted tiles by Duncan Grant, representing Lytton Strachey in repose, from the Crafts Council exhibition reviewed here.

thought very odd. Don't you?

Omega objects were supposedly anonymous - a plan, recalling Renaissance workshops, which has been sabotaged ever since by art historians bent on deciding the authorship of every table and chair. The pooling of ideas for the general good resulted in Omega techniques such as fake marbling, and their varied subject matter of nudes, landscape, still life, animals and caricatures. Candlesticks and textiles received abstract decoration, which usually stemmed directly from illusionist paintings. Fry's "Amenophis" fabric was based on a still life of two eggs, and Duncan Grant was much in demand to paint abstract table-tops which derived from his earlier pictures of lily-ponds.

The Crafts Council exhibition makes imaginative use of paintings and Omega products to create plausible Omega interiors, with Hogarth Press books scattered on the tables. The Anthony d'Offay show on the other hand ignores the Omega's domestic calling and is inappropriately formal, concentrating on the group's paintings and those of their ideological opponents, the Vorticists. But, although they clearly did their best work in the applied arts, the Omega members' paintings are almost al-

ways more flamboyant than one expects. Sea-suality at times pervades both types of product: Bell's design for a painted bedspread turns the garments of a reclining woman into a voluptuous flow of pink and white stripes, and Grant's portrait of Bell herself in a red dress (at the Crafts Council) is lavish in its warmth.

Judith Collins's book, with its rather cheerless but thorough presentation of the historical material, will be useful to art historians despite the absence of much description of the Omega art-works (making the current exhibitions an essential complement to the book). Gaudier-Brzeska and the mysterious Norwegian wood-cutter, Roald Kristian, are given well-deserved attention, since they were responsible for some of the Omega's best work. Collins's narrative is unswayed by all the usual Bloomsbury gossip-one must check elsewhere on the progress of Fry's affair with Vanessa Bell, for instance. And though she mentions Walter Sickert's attempt to place an order for a chamber-pot, it is from a series of letters from Winifred Gill, an Omega employee, to Duncan Grant that one learns that Sickert also had a proposal for what he wanted written on the bottom of the chamber-pot - which Gill alas did not dare repeat.

Fancily faithful

Richard Combs

The Moon in the Gutter
Lumière Cinema

When François Truffaut adapted David Goodis's novel *Down There* for his second feature, *Tirez sur le pianiste*, thereby furthering the recently launched French New Wave, there was some point to the transatlantic connection. As a critic, Truffaut had helped to champion areas of American cinema as neglected as the pulp fiction of Goodis and others (Cornell Woolrich, for instance, a source for one of Truffaut's most revered directors, Alfred Hitchcock, and later for Truffaut himself). And if *Tirez sur le pianiste* no longer worked in the same idiom as its source novel, it did keep faith in terms of a certain pungency of style; eccentricity of character and disdain for respectability. There are thus good reasons to welcome another French adaptation of Goodis - though in the case of *The Moon in the Gutter*, also a second feature from a new director, the film's sense of its own appropriateness (it is nothing if not self-conscious) is so exact as to look like calculation. In addition, appropriate scenes may not be the same as the kind of cross-cultural fertilization that distinguished the Truffaut film.

Among the good reasons is the fact that the French cinema may now be as much in need of a new wave as it was in the early 1960s. On the strength of his first film, *Divya*, which was loaded to the full with the self-confidence and outrageousness necessary to all new wave-ists, Jean-Jacques Beineix looked the most likely candidate to supply it. One almost had to ignore some of the confidence of *Divya* - its stylistic flash and decorative filigree - in order to connect with its fantasy, which had something to do with the aerial extravaganzas, all breaking plots and visual poetry, of a silent film-maker such as Louis Feuillade. Essential to this kind of story-telling are not only narra-

tive surprise but a sense of heaving Iscariot and ineffable mysteries - probably because they're as much unknowns to the maker as to the viewer. Unfortunately, there's no comparable sense of mystery about *The Moon in the Gutter*, which seems completely sealed within its decorative fancies. The irony is that it is much more faithful, in strict story-telling terms, to its source than Truffaut was. What is missing is any sense of cultural or artistic recognition of what made the process of translation and transposition necessary.

In a way, what is wrong is that Beineix has transplanted in the wrong direction. All the baggage of studio fantasy, all the fondness already evident in *Divya*, for lurid compositions framed as solemnly as museum exhibits, has been loaded into Goodis's racy yarn about lovers from opposite sides of the tracks. Separated as well by a dread secret in the past - the rape and suicide of the hero's younger sister - they are eventually propelled on their separate ways by a determinism that is as much emotional as economic. Beineix has expanded and glorified this stark tale without really intensifying it. Every scene, even - or especially - those set in the shabby neighbourhood bar, are staged like operatic tableaux building to huge emotional climaxes (which are then deflated, perhaps intentionally, by the laconic, downbeat dialogue retained from Goodis). But this resting in terms of the most elaborate studio fantasy new or looks like a creative re-imagining. In the setting of the dockyard tenements is no more specific here than it is in the novel, its American associations now jostle about rather disconcertingly with the French. As the hero, Gérard Dapardieu has become simply Gérard, but Nastassia Kinski plays a heroine still called Loretta Channing. Beineix may well be as much an aficionado as Truffaut of this pulp underbrush - his fidelity to plot and dialogue suggests he is. But he has done one curious disservice to his source by not adapting it sufficiently, instead setting it down intact in an alien platoon of over-exquisite flamboyance.

The call of the irrational

R. S. Short

LUIS BUÑUEL
My Last Breath
254pp. Cape. £8.95.
0284 000730

How much funnier and more apt if, as Woody Allen originally intended, Luis Buñuel rather than Marshall McLuhan had been the one to stop forward and settle the cinema queue argument in that famous scene from *Annie Hall*. Unfortunately, a clash of shooting schedules meant that Buñuel had to refuse the invitation - along with a \$30,000 fee for two days' work - which thus became the last of his many abortive American projects. Buñuel tells us that he loved everything about America, but few European film-makers lured by Hollywood had less luck there. His invitation to MGM in 1930 was the beginning of more than fifteen years of directorial silence. *Las Hurdes* apart, *My Last Breath*, with very pessimism, dwells as much on missed opportunities, reverses big and small and unfulfilled dreams as on achievements. All those surrealists acts lovingly conceived but *manqués*: blowing up Picasso's "Guernica" (which makes me uncomfortable both because of its grandiloquent technique and the way it politicizes art); profaning the innocent by showing porno *Sister Vaseline* at a children's movie matinee; bungling the narcotic-spiked drinks at rendezvous that invariably ended up with the girls going home unknowing and untouched. Frustration, in one or another of its manifold forms is, of course, the recurring theme of Buñuel's films as well as of this book. Both express his conviction that chance governs all things and that the conflict between the will of the individual and the demands of society is irreconcilable. Our very instincts are at war with each other. The accidental, the instinctive and the social - so many forces beyond our control that contrive to thwart our spontaneous desires and our most earnest resolutions.

Up to now we have had to rely on Buñuel's films for oblique revelations about the man, for, unlike Dali, he was not a self-publicist. Francisco Aranda in his 1969 critical biography drew heavily on what he called Buñuel's unpublished autobiography, but this only consisted of notes done for the Columbia University Film Study Course at the start of Buñuel's exile in America during the Second World War. Likewise, although *My Last Breath* is presented as an autobiography, it is really a reworking of Buñuel's conversation in the last year of his life. It has been put together by Jean-Claude Carrière, who was his co-scenarist on all but two of the eight films after *Un Chien andalou*. Buñuel died on July 29, 1983 of what he called "terminal old age", the same age as the century. He was a near recluse, stone deaf, able to read only with a powerful magnifying glass, long since delivered of the burden of sexual desire, and in and out of hospitals with a succession of old man's complaints. *My Last Breath* was literally uttered in *extrema*. Buñuel warns us what not to expect of film: Since the surrealist texts of the 1920s, he has made no claims to be a writer, or a philosopher - "I don't do very well with abstraction". "Don't ask me my opinions about economics. Beineix has expanded and glorified this stark tale without really intensifying it. Every scene, even - or especially - those set in the shabby neighbourhood bar, are staged like operatic tableaux building to huge emotional climaxes (which are then deflated, perhaps intentionally, by the laconic, downbeat dialogue retained from Goodis). But this resting in terms of the most elaborate studio fantasy new or looks like a creative re-imagining. In the setting of the dockyard tenements is no more specific here than it is in the novel, its American associations now jostle about rather disconcertingly with the French. As the hero, Gérard Dapardieu has become simply Gérard, but Nastassia Kinski plays a heroine still called Loretta Channing. Beineix may well be as much an aficionado as Truffaut of this pulp underbrush - his fidelity to plot and dialogue suggests he is. But he has done one curious disservice to his source by not adapting it sufficiently, instead setting it down intact in an alien platoon of over-exquisite flamboyance.

oughly banal scene that seemed to him mere appropriate. He had no patience with prefabricated cinematic beauty, since it distracted the spectator from what the film was trying to say. We learn the origin of some of the vivid details from the films: the hatpin through the keyhole in *El recalcó* the threat to Buñuel as a boy peering in the bathing cabins on San Sebastian beach; at the Carmelite convent of Las Batuecas, there really was a monk like the one in *The Phantom of Liberty* who gave the serene advice: "If everyone prayed every day to St. Joseph, everything would be fine."

As in his films, Buñuel defines character through incident. A lively procession of famous contemporaries is deftly sketched in. He sums up a personality with a barbed economy that leaves few unscathed. "I can never forgive him his egomania, his obsessive individualism, his cynical support of the Flangue, and his frank disregard for friendship", is his parting shot to Dali. He took a dislike to Georges Bataille because he had a hard face that never smiled. By his own confession, Buñuel had a greater gift for friendship than for love. He liked Michel Piccoli for "his humour, his secret generosity, his touch of madness and the respect that he never showed me". This might be Buñuel himself, who used actors like Fernando Rey as cinematic alter egos.

My Last Breath testifies to Buñuel's abiding fidelity to Surrealism. He was first seduced by the photo of Benjamin Péret insulting a priest in a 1926 number of *La Révolution Surrealiste*, and by the frankness of the group's survey on sexuality - both unthinkable in his native Spain. For him as for so many others who, unknown to each other, were already practicing instinctive forms of irrational expression, Surrealism came like a recognition rather than a discovery. He describes the genesis of *Un Chien andalou* as an encounter between two dreams, his own and Dali's. In a week of near-total identification between the imaginations of the two men, the film was conceived by a process of exchange akin to automatic writing. There was one simple rule: "No idea or image that might lend itself to a rational explanation of any kind would be accepted. We had to open all doors to the irrational and keep only those images that surprised us without knowing why." Many of the ideas for subsequent films occurred to Buñuel during solitary reveries in the discreet bars of big hotels, when he would let his mind wander, open to images that happened to appear. Afterwards he would force himself to direct the aimless pictures and organize them into a coherent sequence. He would come by the titles of his films by the surrealist device of finding an unexpected word or group of words which opened up a new perspective. His pleasure in bringing dreams directly into his films - "Don't worry if a movie's too short", he once told a bemused Mexican producer, "I'll just put in a dream" - was matched by his determination to resist analysis. He treasured Surrealism because it gave access to depths and darknesses that he yearned for. It respected the essential mystery of all things. Just as important, it was a vehicle for revolt, playful and insolent and dedicated to fighting everything repressive in conventional wisdom. Surrealism's appeal was moral: for existing values it substituted a stronger and richer ethic whose criteria were passion, mystification, black humour, the insult, the call to the abyss.

It is a pity that Abigail Israel's translation is out of sympathy with the spirit of Surrealism. For the sake of a conventionally easy read, she fills in the gaps in Buñuel's discourse, smooths out the asperity, sweetens the dry humour. Much of the spice of his wit comes from the apparently random juxtaposition of ideas. This apparently random game of "pro and con". In a chapter where Buñuel lists his pet loves and hates, he is precisely in the disorderliness of his hates, the cold, the West, the blind, Borges, line-up, the sword-sticks, punctuality, disguise, jargon, sword-sticks, punctuality, disguise. The translator spoils it with would-be helpful additions to the French original such as "De- spite the apparent non-sequitur". In a different vein altogether, and while we're making rent veils together, and "while we're making a list of bites folios". The translation also suffers from blemishes of a different kind, especially when it comes to the mood and tense of verbs. Thus, apparently, Max Ernst "already belonged to the Dada movement".

When Buñuel became friends with him in 1930. "We were to have made eighteen films together" is rendered as "We made eighteen films together". We are told that it was Archibaldo de la Cruz's efforts to commit suicide that were repeatedly forestalled, when he was out to kill. Buñuel's movements at the time of *L'Age d'or* were incomprehensible when he is said to have returned from America in April 1930 instead of 1931. There are also a number of arbitrary and unacknowledged cuts in this English version.

Nevertheless, if the portrait of Buñuel that emerges from these pages is less sbrasive than we expected, it would be unjust to lay all the blame on the translator. Throughout, it is Buñuel's ambivalence and delight in paradox, however black, that comes across, mischief not intransigence. He counts himself lucky to have been born in Calanda, Aragon, "where the Middle Ages lasted until World War One". "Given this heavy dosage of death and religion, it stood to reason that our *joie de vivre* was stronger than most." Disillusioned with politics and scientific progress, and irritated beyond measure by the media (the source of all our anxieties), the octogenarian looks back on his childhood epoch as "painful in its material aspects perhaps, but exquisite in its spiritual life". The chapter on the Spanish Civil War is full of surprises. Despite his ideological sympathy for the anarchists, he couldn't stand their unpredictable and fanatical behaviour, their thievery and vandalism: so much so that he welcomed as irreproachable the discipline and organization of the Communist Party. "As usual I was torn between my emotional attraction to anarchy and my fundamental need for order and peace." Lest it be thought that Buñuel had simply mellowed with age, there is evidence that, on the plane of action at any rate, he had already retired into his "cocoon of timid nihilism" as early as 1929. For example, it has hitherto been supposed that he was acting on his own initiative when he added to the scenario of *Un Chien andalou* the notorious prologue published in 1929, where he de-

nounces the film's admirers as "a stupid crowd who find beautiful or poetic what is, essentially, a desperate and passionate call to assassination". In his own account the story is significantly different. After the film had enjoyed an unheard-of eight-month run at the Studio 28, an unsuspecting Buñuel was convoked before the assembled Surrealists, called on to explain how such a scandalous film could attract such an enormous public, and pilloried for offering the scenario to Gallimard, a "bourgeois" publisher, when the Surrealists wanted it for their own house-organ. Only after much badgering and a struggle with his surrealist conscience did Buñuel come up with the fiery public disclaimer. For good measure, he offered to burn the negative of the film on the Pise du Tertre; an ultimate proof of loyalty which was prudently vetoed by Breton and his friends.

Many of Buñuel's best fantasies are provocative just because they hover so ambiguously between subversion and reaction. During the war he conceived a project for an intimate New York Bar called the "Cannonball", which was to sell the most expensive drinks in the world. There was to be an antique cannon at the door, fired, day or night, whenever a customer spent a thousand dollars. Buñuel thinks it amusing to imagine the ordinary wage-earner awakened at four in the morning by the boom of the cannon and saying to his wife: "Another bastard coughing up a thousand bucks!" He makes no bones about the multiple contradictions among which he has lived: "They're part of me and part of the fundamental ambiguity of all things, which I cherish." He even confesses ruefully that, like Don Lopez receiving prizes for cocoa at the end of *Tristana*, he too enjoys the occasional tête à tête with a passing Dominican. It has been said that the discreet charm of the bourgeoisie consists in its ability to absorb the most damning criticism and continue to balance on the edge of catastrophe. There is an undeniable complicity between Buñuel and his perennial foe. Leave aside the blindness and the complacency of the bourgeoisie and some of his charm is also theirs.

Indestructible hero

Richard Findlater

GILES PLAYFAIR
The Flash of Lightning: A Portrait of Edmund Kean
188pp. William Kimber. £10.50.
071893 03997

Since Edmund Kean died in 1833 at the age of forty-three (or was it forty-five? The evidence wobbles, as on other biographical facts) myth-making versions of his life and work have proliferated sporadically in print and on the stage; yet only six biographies have been published. This seventh one, described in the subtitle as a "portrait", is substantially similar to the same author's *Kean: The Life and Paradox of an Actor*, published in 1939 and 1950 (in a slightly revised edition).

The principal differences between *The Flash of Lightning* and its predecessor lie in the abridgement of Kean's story into a shorter, slimmer book; the relative absence of annotated sources; and the addition of Giles Playfair's commentary on the "chief source" of Raymond FitzSimons's 1976 biography. This is the selection of entries from the 1819-27 diaries kept by James Winston, "acting manager" at Drury Lane, and published by the Society for Theatre Research in 1974.

These diaries have made no impression on Mr Playfair, who is still, after forty-five years, endearingly loyal to his "hero". They "have neither deepened nor altered my understanding of Kean", as he says in his foreword, and reiterates in later pages.

I was already aware he drank too much, that he was obsessively fearful of rival actors, that he suffered from venereal disease and that he consorted with whores. The same could be said of other actors. The diaries merely add some salacious details to this category of weaknesses, and even so sometimes give an exaggerated or unfair impression.

Playfair's book has, no doubt, been published to mark the 150th anniversary of Kean's

death, but it also seems to have been animated by the desire to defend his hero against Winston, FitzSimons and others who may "read more into the diaries than can be justified". Disappointingly, he has not taken this opportunity to re-examine Kean's acting, which is given all too few pages. Why, one wonders, could he not find space for more specific testimony about more roles by such eye-witnesses as Macready, Tieck, Heine, Leigh Hunt and G. H. Lewes? For those who are primarily interested in what Kean did on the stage, rather than in dressing-rooms, brothels, and taverns, the best source-book by far is still H. N. Hillebrand's admirable study, published half a century ago. Oddly, even Hillebrand excludes G. H. Lewes's celebrated verdict that:

The greatest artist is he who is greatest in the highest reaches of his art, even though he may lack the qualities necessary for the adequate execution of some minor details. It is not by his faults, but by his excellences, that we measure a great man. Thus estimated, Edmund Kean was incomparably the greatest actor I have ever seen.

Playfair goes much further. He opens his foreword by declaring: "I suspect that Edmund Kean was the greatest actor who ever lived", a suspicion that he does not attempt to confirm or document. To rack superlatives to such limits on such restricted, second-hand evidence indicates the strangely peripatetic power of the Kean legend. Earlier victims have included Sartre, whose remake of Dumas's play merits revival; Julius Berci, whose adventurous "imaginary memoirs" of Kean, *The Sun's Bright Child* (1946) are ignored by both FitzSimons and Playfair; and Maurice Wilson Disher, who wrote a "fictional biography" with the giveaway title of *Mad Genius* in 1950 (he had access to the Winston diaries). *The Flash of Lightning*, together with Ben Kingsley's audacious solo on stage and television, are the latest but certainly not the last examples of the meamorphic effect exerted upon susceptible actors, authors, managers and publishers by the Kean syndrome.

Handwritten note in right margin: "The Flash of Lightning" is a play on words.

Including the irrational

Graham Bradshaw

STEPHEN BOOTH
King Lear, Macbeth, Indefinition, and Tragedy
183pp. Yale University Press. £15.
0300028504

As Lafew observes in *All's Well*, "we have our philosophical persons to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless. Hence is it that we make trifles of terrors, ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge when we should submit to an unknown fear." Trifling with the terrors of *Macbeth* might seem hard, but we have often been told to observe its "tetralogy-like pattern", in which the Evil of killing the King leads the outraged Powers to bring about a reassuringly inevitable triumph of Good — like Victor Hugo's Providence, when Napoleon upsets the Balance of the Universe.

But the Tillyardian, providentialist reading of Shakespeare's tetralogies has itself been thoroughly dismantled by H. A. Kelly, Wilbur Sanders and others. Much recent Shakespeare criticism has been concerned to show how frequently critical debates correspond with, and try to short-circuit, opposed energies and perspectives within the plays; Norman Rabkin's *Shakespeare and the Problem of Meaning* brilliantly shows how the plays' intensely involving

imaginative effect both depends on "kinds of complexity that resist interpretative simplification" and explains the urge to simplify. Stephen Booth, a colleague of Rabkin's at Berkeley, is no less opposed to attempts to reduce and limit radically subversive imaginative energies, and argues in this timely, challenging study that "theories of tragedy" are so important to us because they "keep us from facing tragedy itself": the word *tragedy* is an emergency measure, an "intellectual life preserver" with which we ensconce ourselves into seeming knowledge, on being confronted with "limitlessness" and "indefiniteness".

Aristotle's account of what tragedy is, or should be, stipulates that "Everything irrational should, if possible, be excluded", to which Booth replies: "Tragedies do not exclude the irrational; they include it; Aristotle's favorite model, *Oedipus Rex*, is proof against him." Shrewdly, Booth suggests that part of the appeal of the *Poetics* is that Aristotle wants to believe, as audiences want to believe, "that the comprehensibility given to tragic events by the comprehending — the encompassing — framework of the play is in the nature of the events themselves".

Like critics, characters in *Macbeth* and especially *Lear* "constantly and vainly strive to establish the limits of things", and to make their experiences conform to notions of mean-

ing and value. The defining qualities of "merciless Macdonwald" and "brave Macbeth" only "become confused as a direct result of the Captain's adjectival insistence on the definition": Booth might have added that of Duncan's various attempts to impose order on horror none is more ludicrously exposed than his wish to see the Captain's unseemly unseam as a "worthy gentleman". And in "Edgar's desperate efforts to classify and file human experience, Shakespeare tantalizes us with the comfort to be had from ideologically Procrustean beds to which he refuses to tailor his matter".

That refusal is of course a crucial part of the "matter", above all when Cordelia dies. But this helps to justify what Booth recognizes, ruefully, as his own "theory of tragedy", which emphasizes "inconclusiveness" or indefiniteness while attending very closely to the various ways in which *Lear* and *Macbeth* achieve imaginative and structural coherence, or definition. Such a theory is attractive, and not paradoxical, if we agree that we feel "the presence of an encompassing order in the work (as opposed to the world it describes)". Indeed, I think Booth might have gone further, and shed more light on why Cordelia's death is so shocking, if he had said more of Shakespeare's habit of actually calling attention to his own carefully tailored refusals to tailor. Booth brings out very well the remorseless way in which Shakespeare

emphasizes the contingency of Cordelia's death: Edmund might have spoken sooner, Lear himself might have saved her. That is part of our pain — but so is our sense that what is accidental and meaningless within the world of the play is also contrived, and meant: the dramatist has chosen not to spare us this, and makes us aware of the path he did not take.

In *The Winter's Tale* Shakespeare does take the path which allows final restitutions but still stresses, through elaborate reflexive ironies, that the comforts are no less contrived; we do not "hoot" as we might at "an old tale", but why not? Poulina's triumphant speech reminds us that the miracle is a trick of art — hers within the play, but really Shakespeare's — and reflexive irony implicates us, quizzing our responses. Booth compares the final scenes of *Lear* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, to show how both plays subvert generic expectations and conventions of dramatic closure; but he doesn't pursue the parallel between accidents which are contingent interruptions within the world of each play but also carefully contrived conclusions. By contriving to admit contingency the play makes its world seem more than ever like our own, and provides another vantage from which to consider Booth's admirable distinction between the encompassing order of the work and the alarming indefiniteness of the world it describes.

Working on the edge

Piers Gray

ELOISE KNAPP HAY
T. S. Eliot's Negative Way
214pp. Harvard University Press. £14.
0674246756

A psychopathology of contemporary academic criticism might mention, in passing, Faust's Syndrome or the fantasy of omniscience. It would be unfair — perhaps — to suggest that Eloise Knapp Hay is a victim of this fantasy. However, despite her commitment to the negative way of Eliot's poetry and the "rather difficult theology" behind it, there are moments when her prose has a rather too positive way with itself: "The point that has seldom, if ever, been made is . . .". "No one has sufficiently emphasized the distinction . . .". "An irony always missed . . .". But it would be misleading to dwell on such certainties: the book's character is in its commitment to arguments.

Professor Hay's central thesis is that Eliot's verse moves from a negative sense of the negative (a scepticism bordering on pyrrhonism before 1926) towards an affirmation of the *via negativa* in one's journey towards God. She is thus resolute in refusing to see the poetic negations of *The Waste Land* as rehearsals for Eliot's later Christian verse; however, from "Ash Wednesday" on, she argues, Eliot's verse moves towards its *summa* of *Four Quartets* gilded by both Eastern and Western mystical traditions. Her chapter on the *Quartets* is therefore particularly helpful in leading the uninitiated reader through the complexities of St John of the Cross, distinguishing the different "nights" of the search for "divine union": the "dark night of sense and the dark night of the soul", the night of the initiate and the night of the saint.

As far as Hay concentrates upon specific analyses of different religious texts, her work is illuminating. But unfortunately there is simultaneously a sense of something being not quite right, as in, for example, the following:

In 1946 Heidegger, answering the question, "What Are Poets For?" writes: "The venture to set free what is ventured, in such a way indeed that it sets free what is flung free into nothing other than a drawing toward the center. Drawing this way, the venture ever and always brings the ventured towards itself in this drawing."

This is poor stuff, yet Hay quotes it with approval: it seems that there is a matter of discrimination to be considered here. For later, in her chapter on "Ash Wednesday" (which contains an excellent account of Eliot's arguments with T. A. Richards over poetry and beliefs), she quotes the following:

His [Valéry's] was, I think, a profoundly destructive mind, even nihilistic. This destroyed, after our opinion of the poetry. But it should, I think, increase our admiration of the man who wrings the

poetry. For the agony of creation, for a mind like Valéry's, must be very great. When the mind constantly mocks and dissuades, and urges that creative activity is vain, then the slow genesis of a poem . . . [i]s only possible by a separate heroism which is a triumph of character.

That, of course, is Eliot. As Hay rightly points out, we learn as much about the author here as about the subject and, one might add, a great deal more about poets and what they are "for".

A sense of unease, then, has to be accounted for. Perhaps it lies in the contrast between the following two passages. First, the opening sentence of the Introduction: "The single volume that makes up the complete poems and plays of T. S. Eliot presents an enormous challenge to critical theory." We can assent to this, even if we hesitate before the isolated concept of "critical theory"; but what are we to make of the following?

In these three years [1911 to 1914] . . . he did more than scratch the surface of Indian thought. He studied the *Pancha-Tantra* and Bhagavad-Gita, as well as the sacred books of Buddhism — the Jātakas, Buddhagosa's Commentary on the *Anguttara Nikāya* (Legends of the Buddhist Saints), selected discourses of the Buddha, Panjanjali's *Sūtras* with the *Bhāṣya* and the *Vāṇīka*, and the Commentary of Vachaspati-Mishra — all in the original language.

In what possible way can this — as it stands — offer any help to the reader or any challenge to critical theory? On the contrary, it is in its practical disregard for the enormous challenge of Eliot's work that Hay's book makes one uneasy. For consider this: "[Eliot] agreed with Bradley (against the extreme idealists) that appearances are as 'real' as what lies behind them, and this contrasts strongly with the 'Unreal City' we see later in *The Waste Land*." But for Bradley nothing lies behind appearances: there are only appearances and their degrees of reality. Or again, of the following lines from "Le Directeur", "Malheur à la malheureuse Tamise / Qui coule si près du Spectateur". Hay writes: "The 'reactionary' commercial agents of *The Spectator* go touring arm-in-arm past a small girl, Tamise, pugnosed and in rage."

The point is this: to what extent can we share in Professor Hay's response to this challenge Eliot's poetry offers? That it is a challenge cannot be denied, I think; for in reading the poems we are constantly being drawn into worlds with which we may be unfamiliar. When responding to it and to them (and to the coincidental criticism) we are working on the edge of interpretative truth; and in attempting thus to understand "truth" we can do worse than to appreciate Eliot's own observations on our fallibility:

Without pursuing that curious and obscure problem of the meaning of interpretation further, it occurs to me as possible that there may be an essential part of error in all interpretation, without which it would not be interpretation of all . . .

The autobiographer as hero

Peter Gay

RICHARD WAGNER
My Life
Translated by Andrew Gray, edited by Mary Whitall
266pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50.
0521229294

Among Richard Wagner's dramatic productions, the greatest was probably himself. He was as thoroughly composed, as purged of unbecoming infidelities and laden with resounding maxims, as any of his music dramas. That sounds obvious almost to banality, until one recognizes the effort and ingenuity that Wagner put into the presentation of his own life. In his autobiography, he was writing for others, for Cosima von Bülow, for Ludwig II, and (as Pierre Boulez was not the first to note) for posterity.

Now, with this efficiently translated and suitably annotated edition of *My Life*, the urgency of Wagner's self-promoting campaign stands out for English-speaking readers more plainly than ever. Based on Martin Gregor-Dellin's authoritative edition of *Mein Leben*, this volume deserves to rank as the definitive reading version for all but the most impassioned scholars of Wagner's life. In a round-up of recent books on Wagner in the *New York Review of Books*, Joseph Kerman has suggested that what still remains to be done is an edition "checking Wagner's account of the facts point by point". The suspiciousness that this suggestion embodies is striking and just, though I suppose that *Wagner-Kenner* would probably not fail to spot the omissions, distortions and outright falsifications that pervade *My Life*.

And they do pervade it. Wagner's unwillingness, almost inability, to tell the truth about himself is so palpable that even the publisher has been driven to an exceptional outburst of candour. The blurb confesses: "Given the intended readership and the circumstances of its composition" — and Cambridge University Press might well have added "and Wagner's character" — it is "hardly surprising that Wagner should either omit or distort facts from time to time; he does not linger over previous affairs (his feelings for Mathilde Wesendonck are barely hinted at), he portrays his relationship with his first wife, Minna, as a good deal more distant than it really was, and he plays down his involvement in the Dresden affair of 1849." Wagner's *My Life*, then, is far less the life of the real Richard Wagner than the life he thought his mistress, his patron and his adoring world would want to learn about. A biographer, Sigmund Freud once said, lives in perpetual danger of falling in love with his subject. It is a danger that Richard Wagner, writing about himself, consistently courted.

Wagner's self-adulation is not always gross. He praises himself lavishly, to be sure; copying the scores "of the masters I loved", he notes early on, he "acquired the graceful handwriting so much admired in later life", and there is much more to the same effect. At the same time, though, displaying considerable cunning, he does not omit what Cosima von Bülow was to call some "unedifying memories". But Wagner, as it were, places the warts on his self-portrait with such finesse that we are invited to admire the whole face all the more. He recalls getting drunk and misbehaving, or scoring Beethoven's *Battle of Vittoria* with such élan that he drove everyone, in panic-stricken stampede, from the theatre. Again, living in Paris in 1841 (to give a trivial but telling instance), very much out of the public eye, he is irritated by a pianist living next door, who continually practices Liszt's fantasy on *Lucia di Lammermoor*; in revenge, or self-defence, Wagner moves his "triflingly out-of-tune" piano up against his neighbour's wall, and asks a friend to accompany him on the piccolo in the overture to *La Favorita*; this, Wagner confesses, "seems to have truly terrified my neighbour, a young piano teacher", who in fact moved out. And Wagner, triumphant, "felt somewhat ashamed" while he expects his readers to

pretitification and even denying his lack of understanding, for biographical truth is unavailable, and if we had it, it would be useless." We might resist this appraisal as far too pessimistic, as prompted by the shadow of old age and of Hitler's nightmare world, and try to think of biographies that blunt, or refute, Freud's denunciation. But Richard Wagner's biography of Richard Wagner lends it a good deal of substance.

Wagner's programmatic unreliability raises the inconvenient question of just what value this idealized self-portrait can claim as a historical document. A closely printed volume of about 750 pages which describes the first fifty-five years of a composer and conductor who had been everywhere and knew everybody is bound to contain fascinating glimpses of famous faces and dramatic incidents. And here *My Life* does not disappoint its readers. Composers, singers, impresarios, patrons, music dealers and publishers crowd the pages, as do circumstantial accounts of Wagner's progress in composition and instrumentation, premieres, travels, encounters with Meyerbeer, Halévy and other Jews, the death of beloved dogs and (this in much detail) the course of tedious colds, swollen nose and all. This very copiousness lends these pages an air of authenticity.

Yet the authenticity is largely specious. In manufacturing a persona for himself, Wagner does not scruple to dramatize, or wholly invent, incidents that will help the hero along the way to immortality. We now know, as Kerman reminds us, that Wagner "falsified two of his alleged musical epiphanies which linked him to Beethoven — his hearing of Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient as Leonore in *Fidelio* (which did not happen in 1829) and his attendance at Paris rehearsals of the Ninth Symphony (ditto in 1839)". It is one thing for a self-promoting autobiographer to tone down his radicalism and minimize an earlier love affair because

he knows that a king and a new mistress will be reading him. It is something else, and far more troubling, to have him play games with the decisive emotional moments in his life.

What *My Life* loses in validity as an objective source is matched by its corresponding gains as a subjective revelation. There is surely nothing very mysterious about an artist seeking to ingratiate himself with those whose goodwill he craves and needs. There is nothing calling for subtle psychological interpretation in the spectacle of someone taking every opportunity he can to put himself in a favourable light and settling scores with real or imagined enemies along the way. But the kind of reshaping of emotionally significant moments which pockmarks *My Life* suggests something more than policy; it hints at the pressure of an obsession.

I can only speculate about this hidden impulsion, but my conjecture fits, I think, what we know of Wagner's character and lifelong preoccupations. The strenuous sculpting of his life reads to me like an instance of what psychoanalysts call the family romance. This fantasy, widespread among the young and gifted, denies that the fantasist's parents are his real parents, and substitutes for them, especially for the father, someone distinguished or celebrated or at least free from unpleasant traits. The family romance in the normal course of events yields to pressures of reality, but some harbour it all their lives. Beethoven was one of these. It had, of course, long been familiar to Beethoven's biographers that he would insist, even after seeing incontrovertible documentary proof to the contrary, that he had been born not in 1770 but in 1772. But it was the merit of Maynard Solomon's *Beethoven* to show this to be part of Beethoven's unconscious strategy of replacing his drunken, unsuccessful father with someone else.

Now, Richard Wagner had — or thought he had — pressing reasons for denying his father

or, rather, the man he thought to be his father, the actor and painter Ludwig Geyer, his mother's second husband, and his affectionate stepfather. But Geyer, Wagner believed, was Jewish, and his need to deny that he himself had "Jewish blood" in his veins was to become one of his driving passions. Robert Gutman and other biographers have frequently (and, it seems to me, plausibly) suggested that this urge is one source, perhaps the main source, of Wagner's ruthless, murderous, but inconsistent anti-Semitism: the man who wished that all Jews be burned to death at a performance of Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* was also the man who could surround himself with Jewish admirers and bestow on them his condescending and exploitative friendship. In the second sentence of *My Life*, Wagner explicitly calls Friedrich Wagner "my father", but he seems to have been unsure of the truth of this assertion. That he was called "Richard Geyer" all through his boyhood can only have strengthened this uncertainty. In Wagner, then, the family romance took the paradoxical twist of the fantasy that his legal father was also his actual father — a fantasy made no less unsettling for having possibly been a true. This paradox is accompanied by a second one: there seems to have been no reason to believe that Geyer was of Jewish origin. But Wagner seems to have thought so, and that is what matters.

Wagner's need, then, to purge himself of his "taint" readily combined with, or helped to shape, his urgent need to appear as more or less perfect, to become worthy of his glowing self-portrait which he tried to impose on others. If I am right, this gives poignant relevance to Wagner's adoration of Beethoven and his declared filiation to the man he worshipped as the greatest of composers: what the two had in common most profoundly was less their music than their fantasy life. It is an intriguing thought.

A very Prussian misfit

S. S. Prawer

JOACHIM MAASS
Kleist: A Biography
Translated by Ralph Manheim
313pp. Secker and Warburg. £12.95.
043627005

Randers of the original version of Joachim Maass's biography of Kleist (*Kleist, die Fackel Preussens*, Munich 1957) are in for a pleasant surprise with this volume. The verbal inflation, the over-indulgence in metaphorical flights of fancy, which some of us found so disturbing in 1957, have all but disappeared. Whole paragraphs of rhetoric have been cut away, along with a large number of sentences, half-sentences and phrases, and what is left constitutes an eminently readable narrative of Kleist's life with just enough account of his work to make non-German readers understand those qualities which German readers and theatre-goers have found so uniquely fascinating. The tragic story of Kleist's many attempts to add lustre to an already illustrious family name as an army officer, as a civil servant, as an editor of journals, and as an agitator against Napoleon's occupation of German soil, is told as fully as the many gaps in contemporary records and Kleist's own love of mystification will allow. Maass shows very well how temperament and history combined to drive Kleist into failure, psychosomatic illnesses, and — ultimately — suicide at the age of thirty-four; but he brings out no less clearly the character-traits, the circumstances and the events which helped to shape his greatness as a dramatist and a writer of prose tales and sketches. There have been of good English translations of some of Kleist's major works, notably the short stories, and distinguished scholars, from Walter Dyer to John Ellis and Denis Dyer, have interpreted these works for English-speaking readers — but these works for English-speaking readers — but a straightforward biography has been a long-felt want.

Maass bases his narrative on sources made available by earlier scholars; documents which have been most conveniently assembled, and edited by Helmut Schöbner in a series of

publications that include the Hansar Verlag's *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe* (revised edition 1961), *Heinrich von Kleists Lebensspuren* (1957) and *Heinrich von Kleists Nachleben* (1967). He has not, as far as I can see, attempted the kind of detective-work which Hermann Reske recently did when he examined Swiss parish records and local newspapers and came up with evidence that makes a revision of the chapter headed "Island Idyll" in Maass's book urgently necessary. He is somewhat cavalier about textual cruces: when he makes Kleist say that *Peut-être* contained "all the suffering and all the radiance of my soul" he neglects to tell us that modern editors prefer the reading "Schmutz" ("filth") to the older editors' "Schmerz" ("pain") or "suffering". In other places he seems to have misinterpreted existing evidence. It seems to me unjustifiable, for instance, to infer from Kleist's letter of September 14, 1800 that the writings of Goethe, Schiller and Wieland were *forbidden* in Catholic Würzburg. What Kleist is saying, rather, is that readers were not interested in writings of this quality, and that local lending-libraries therefore stocked their shelves almost exclusively with Gothic novels of various kinds. Occasionally, too, the author lets his enthusiasm for the hero of his biography run away with him. Kleist is indeed a great and original writer; but it does his cause little service to claim, for instance, that the "utterly unexpected and purely psychogenic death" of his Penthesilea constitutes "a conception unprecedented in world literature". Shakespeare, for one, had there before: one need think only of Enobarbus's last monologue and death in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Finally, there are occasions when the book takes for granted information that even specialists in German literature may not possess. What is the use of telling us of Kleist's connections with "the Technical Deputation" if we are not told what that "deputation" was, or of quoting a sentence which begins "But just as when two lines meet on one side of a point and suddenly, after passing through infinity, emerge on the other side . . ." without elucidating the unfamiliar mathematical concept which can alone make us visualize Kleist's image and assess its significance?

In the passage just quoted, the translator has served both his authors well. Often, however, what Kleist in fact says is distorted by Ralph Manheim's versions. Several times, for instance, he needlessly removes the characteristic "as if" constructions by means of which Kleist conveys the difficulty of speaking accurately of one's experiences: "wie an einem Abgrund" becomes "on a precipice", "wie befüllt" becomes "winged", and so on. In a verse translation he translates "Rab" as "culture", although "raven" or "corvid" would have done just as well from the point of view of metre and assonance. By translating "we nn" as "though" he irons out one of his author's most characteristic paradoxes: "eine Habe, die nichts wert ist, wenn sie uns etwas wert ist" becomes, feebly, "it is a worthless possession though it has worth for us" (my italics). He substitutes one physical action for another, translating "wälze ich mich vor Freude" as "gurgling with joy". He misrepresents the editorial policy of Kleist's journal *Phöbus* when he makes its editors say: "we shall suffer no unarmed or lightly armed antagonist to confront us in the arena we are here opening"; what the German original means is that the editors will be rigorous in their choice of contributors (fellow combatants) rather than that of *amateurs*. When Kleist calls Napoleon and his armies "der allgemeine Wolf", he means to say that this is a wolf who menaces everybody, not a "common wolf". When he calls his sister Ulrike "mellu grosses Mädchen", he surely conveys that she is "great-hearted" or "gent of soul"; Manheim's "my big girl", like his earlier "too big for her sex", seems to me to give quite the wrong impression. And there is at least one instance in which Kleist is made to say the very opposite of what he said in fact: when "Nicht jeden Schlag ertragen soll der Mensch" becomes, inexplicably, "A man should have to sustain every blow".

When all reservations have been made, however, it can be said that readers of Maass's book will gain an accurate idea of the life and work of this strange genius, wayward and "misfit" in so many ways, yet also so typically Prussian in the tension between discipline and hysteria, rationalism and fascination by metaphysical lights and dreams.

Birth of a Republic

D. C. Watt

JOHN H. BACKER
Winds of History: The German Years of Lucius
Dubignon Clay
323pp. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
£22.95.
0442213824

General Lucius D. Clay ranks with Douglas MacArthur as one of the two American soldiers to make the improbable transition from soldier and military governor to the nearest America has ever offered to the position of Viceroy. He began as a three-star deputy for military government to General Eisenhower, in March 1945. Four years later he finally won his retirement, having presided over the establishment of the West German Federal Republic and seen the Soviet blockade of Berlin lifted. He never achieved his heart's desire, to command American forces in action. But in the peculiar circumstances and shifting political sands of the years 1945-49, when he held one of the most important policy-making posts in the United States system, but held it 4,000 miles away from the bureaucratic and court in-fighting by which American policy evolved in these years, he developed a capacity for political judgment and, still more, a political staying-power which was very largely an outgrowth of his personality and the reputation he established for political integrity.

John H. Backer, now a recognized historian of the American occupation of Germany, was a senior figure on the economic division of United States military government and spent much of his subsequent career in the Foreign Service. He writes as a patriot and an admirer of Clay, warts and all - not as an unquestioning patriot, nor as a naive one. His patriotism is exposed more in his monocular stance and in his failure to see anything but the American side of his story. The British and the French figure as obstacles to the proper operation of his hero's policy. General Sir Brian Robertson, Clay's opposite number, becomes a stock figure out of an American comedy, the bumbling - blimpish - British soldier, stumbling through life with a few clichés and a very considerable detachment from reality, a caricature of the real man whose administrative ability as a soldier was at least the equal of Clay's and whose experience was considerably greater. That he was not a man of Clay's calibre was in part due to the integrated nature of British policy-making and the close rein that was held

on him by the Foreign Office.

Clay, by contrast, enjoyed the freedom and the possibility of initiative that he did, simply because of the divisions and confusions that existed between American policy-makers and the ineluctable realities of the German situation, which would not go away. Nor does the emerging political leadership of the Federal Republic stand up much better; spear-carriers and crowd extras in their role, save for the Socialist leader, Kurt Schumacher, depicted here as a fanatical, strong-minded opponent, of admitted integrity, to all Clay's plans for the establishment of a Federal West German state. Clay's views of the new Germany fitted exactly the bourgeois, business-oriented, particularist, city-based ethos of the new German conservatism from Adenauer downwards. This was hardly surprising since this was exactly the part of society with which Clay had most to do in the United States, and it was in this milieu that he was to implant himself on retirement.

It is important in understanding Clay's success, as it is with the much greater success of General Marshall, to give due weight to the excellent relations established in the 1930s and maintained through the 1940s between those responsible for the logistical staff and budgetary aspects of the Army and the appropriate Committees of both houses of Congress. Marshall's great strength was the reputation that he had built up with Congress throughout the 1930s for being a reasonable man who spoke the truth and was of demonstrable integrity. When he became Roosevelt's Chief of Army Staff in 1940 his appointment enormously strengthened Roosevelt's standing with Congress, notoriously one of his less happy areas of activity. In much the same way Clay, whose very rapid promotion had followed that of Marshall, had already spent four years working closely with Congress, when working as principal liaison officer with Congress for the rivers and harbour section of the Chief of Engineers. During the war years he had built up a reputation for single-minded drive that verged on the authoritarian in his insistence on matching war production with military need. In the course of his work he had left a long trail of bruised toes and injured feelings among fellow officers, prominent and senior industrialists and Congress alike; but none had ever impugned his integrity or ability. And he had certainly learned how to make the military and bureaucratic machinery of Washington work for him.

In the beginning his principal difficulties

were the vagueness and inadequacy of his instructions (a consequence of the spanner thrown by the Morgenthau plan into the preparation of a policy for defeated Germany), and the question whether military government was an activity which should be *sui generis* and independent, or subjected to military commanders in the field. Clay, who held to the view that military government should give way to civilian political government as soon as possible, was determined to make this separation a reality from as near the beginning as possible. In the meantime the job of military government was to supervise civilian German authorities, not to govern Germany itself. Clay came to Germany with a second very strong conclusion, that it was his job to make Four Power co-operation in the Allied Military Government of Germany reality. He had, in Backer's words, "a missionary commitment to the Rooseveltian conception of a single post-war world".

He began with a series of rigid and damaging orders: de-industrialization, de-Nazification at all levels, non-fraternization. Democratization and decentralization were also part of his brief. Much of this brief was unworkable; other parts resulted in the replacement of Nazi administrators by an equally authoritarian technocratic élite whose non-Nazi record resulted from social antipathy towards the Nazi *arrivistes* or opposition to Nazi centralism as anti-Christian, and who felt themselves well able to distinguish between the convinced Nazi and the *Mitläufer* who had joined the party for professional reasons. Clay found himself harried by the US press for not having carried de-Nazification far enough while at the same time being unable to produce cadres of local administrators, professional men and technocrats adequate to the demands of getting Germany going again. The result was the Draconian Law 8, which proved in practice impossible to operate, producing, in the words of Clay's own officers, "bitterness and despair" among the vast mass of German managers, administrators and entrepreneurs at all levels. Clay's own comment is revealing: "the quickest way to get a bad order changed, is to carry it out vigorously".

At that point Clay began to concern himself with the future of Germany. He acted in response to an outright bid by the Soviet leadership for the support of a united and unified Germany. The proposal for a union of the British and American zones voiced by Byrnes, the US Secretary of State, at Stuttgart in

September 1946 was Clay's proposal originally, as was the establishment of constitutions for the three *Länder* under German occupation. He was, however, to follow the course of attempting to make quadripartite control of Germany work until either the Soviets made it impossible, or his superiors forbade it. Whichever's moves on the American side contributed to the onset of the Cold War, Clay's, on the evidence presented here, were not among them. The new anti-Soviet line of 1947 came from Truman and the State Department, faced with the right-wing Congress produced by the 1946 mid-term elections. Byrnes resigned, John Foster Dulles, widely tipped as the next Secretary of State if the Republicans should, as expected, win the 1948 elections, appeared as adviser to the new Secretary of State, General Marshall.

To Marshall, Clay appeared a victim of "localitis". At the Moscow foreign ministers' conference in March 1947 he was snubbed and silenced by Dulles. The experience made him Germany's best advocate in Allied councils, convinced as he was that the State Department would "lose" Germany in their rush to conciliate Britain and France. It was this position that he was to occupy for the rest of his term in Germany: a determined opponent of the socialization or internationalization of the Ruhr; a Southern "States Rights" who favoured corporate rather than centralist solutions to the problems of establishing a Federal German State; the principal spokesman for German economic recovery in the division of Marshall Aid. Federal Germany has much to thank him for. The French called him "Clay d'Orsay"; British observers commented that "he looks like a Roman emperor and behaves like one". The State Department commented resignedly on the need "to make a Treaty with our generals" before they went into an international conference.

Clay succeeded in leaving his mark by virtue of his efficiency, his "ornerness" and his ultimate understanding of the role of a soldier in a democracy, always keeping before him the possibility of resignation if he asked too much of his considers unwise or against his conscience. In the end he resigned; but by then his work was done. Federal Germany was as much his creation as it was Adenauer's. John H. Backer has given him a remarkable biography. Whether it is history or not is for others who know the British, French, or German Socialist sides of the story to say. And that story still remains to be written.

murdered by the Nazis rather than to allow them to reach the only available haven, Palestine". Despite selective quotation from British Government documents, Dr Perl does not establish this claim. Nor does his discussion of the "Darion II" affair, in which a Haganah team, acting under the orders of the Jewish Agency, collaborated with British security services in a sabotage plan to block the Danube, amount to proof of a conspiracy between the Jewish Agency and the British Government. His scrutiny of the documents at the Public Record Office might have revealed that there were some British officials - notably Sir Hugh Knatchbull-Hugessen, Ambassador to Turkey - who did not partake of the depressingly general mean-spiritedness, lack of imagination, and outright hostility displayed by so many of their colleagues.

A useful corrective to Perl's account of the "Darion II" and other episodes is Bernard Wasserstein's *Britain and the Jews of Europe, 1939-1945*, (1979), of which Perl appears to be unaware. Wasserstein's meticulous analysis of official sources reveals a lamentable record of indifference, complacency, lack of compassion - but not conscious and eager collaboration in Hitler's plans for the "Final Solution". Scarcely documented and tendentious though it is, Dr Perl's memoir is none the less valuable, not merely as a memoir of personal brevity under appalling pressures, but also for the light it sheds on aspects of European Jewish psychology. *Operation Action* goes far to explain the searing choices and experiences that helped shape the ideology and emotional universe of such figures as Menachem Begin, who has supplied the book with a foreword.

The Washington way

J. K. L. Walker

ROBERT MARTIN
Gilbert: A Comedy of Manners
316pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.
024111579

Following her introduction to modern American etiquette, *Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behaviour* (reviewed in the TLS of October 21, 1983), Judith Martin has written a further essay, in the form of a first novel, on certain aspects of East Coast behaviour. *Gilbert* is constructed in the form of a dialogue whose two panels, Harvard in the late 1930s and Washington some twenty years later, depict the creation - largely by his own hand - and the flowering of Gilbert Fairchild, son of a New York accountant occupied in calculating "low taxes on high incomes". As a student, Gilbert gradually gets his act together: pure selfishness honourably displayed, intellectual cunning, rudeness to women, the poverty card generously played. In his slabby rooming-house in an unfashionable part of Cambridge he steals his cat's milk and his neighbours' newspapers and mops up his girls after love-making with a sweater that is, like the sheets, long unwashed. Billowy Margery yields, temporarily, to willowy Erna, "everything screaming Connecticut" despite her Minneapolis background, who introduces Gilbert to Washington where she has a vacation job in the office of a Senator Tsbol. Cool French-Canadian Liane, with whom Erna shares the Georgetown house, looks like a ballerina but works as social secretary at an African embassy when not threatening the career of middle-aged, middle-grade George Beaufort from the State Department where her mistresses, like her brown shoes, are unacceptable. France and Britain, Liane teaches Gilbert, head the embassy pecking-order (ah, those dear, dead Eisenhower days).

Washington, Gilbert decides, is where his future lies; not, of course, as an elected representative, which would entail keeping a straight face, but as a part-creator of the people's choice. Blinking only slightly after congratulating Liane's Ambassador, a former Oxford don, on his command of English, Gilbert borrows back to Harvard to turn out papers on "The Metaphor in the Public Utterances of Vice-President Nixon" and, unsuccessfully, to draw back Margery from a former room-mate

Ruddy Loomis after the psychological sessions have got out of hand. Governor Groton, innocently pausing in Harvard to charm the nation's future leaders, finds himself chosen as a ladder, and reluctantly allows Gilbert to set foot on him.

Act Two opens in Washington towards the end of the 1970s with a now fortyish Gilbert installed as Special Adviser to the new President, whom he has nursed to his present eminence over the past fifteen years. After the Inaugural junketings business is slack as everyone considers what to do next. Socially, Gilbert and Wanda, his new young wife, are ahead of the pack with their expensively re-Victorianized house in Kalorama Triangle, equipped with the chic detritus of the Oxfam export department, and in a block that has had its own murder. Erna, with her Foreign Service husband in Kabul, her pale lipstick, little leather skirts and worldwide ethnicity, has long since been lapped but is allowed to put up the money to open a boutique with Wanda, who has been "lucky enough to be born with style and nerve". Other Harvard faces from the past reappear in instant refutation of their legends: Buddy Loomis, anxiously soliciting support for his panacea of Positive Growth - "just a simple technique of making life work" - and accompanied by Margery's successor Immaculata, "one of those pliant substitutes for wives whom American servicemen acquire abroad at PXs"; Margery herself, now a powerful New York doctor and advocate for the disabled. Gilbert fails to seduce her but ends up embracing her principles instead, thus at last finding something for the White House to do.

Gilbert's discovery of virtue is, of course, a disappointment, but that is in the nature of the genre. He has tried evil, but only "a moderate amount in a gentlemanly way" and has "never liked it for its own sake", so Ms Martin in the end lets him off the hook - with due acknowledgment to the stimulus his unshamed selfishness has afforded his Harvard contemporaries throughout their lives. She writes with a fine dry wit and has an acute but indulgent eye for the excesses of fashionable Washington life. For this she may be forgiven some *longueurs*; like her hero, she doesn't seem quite sure what to do once she is inside the White House, despite an intimate knowledge of its topography; nor are her characters all that engaging. Still, though the plot may creak the furniture throws off a good rich Early American sheen.

Greying among the greens

Joy Grant

TERESA WAUGH
Painting Water
190pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.
024111595

In this, her first novel, Teresa Waugh (daughter-in-law of Evelyn) offers an unsensational chronicle of middle class family life in Surrey; she follows the contrasting fortunes of two sisters from adolescence to middle age - in the case of one, to her death.

Plain, studious Marjorie prefers "independent" (teaching classics in a girls' school) to any further exploration of feelings roused in her; the age of twenty-seven by an Italian waiter's kiss. Pretty Alice makes an early marriage with a thoroughly decent, thoroughly dull man who gives her three children and a lifetime of happiness. Every moment spared from his state agency Dick spends among his fruit and vegetables, which admiring Alice bottles or, come the late 1960s, prepares for the deep freeze. At times her life seems a cheerful race against his over-abundant greens. Eventually Alice, like herself, (superfluously, one may think) whether her happy existence - and whether indeed her talented artist son's enthusiasm for painting water - have been simply a matter of having got bored and killing time. She gets a duly answered.

Like labelling her chapters, Teresa Waugh neatly clarifies her chronology, and draws attention to some of the shifts in manner and theme that occurred between 1944

and 1982. (For Alice, the most alarming moment in a sedate marriage comes in 1967, when a male friend, whom she suspects is homosexual, tells her his loves her. By contrast, her free-wheeling daughter shacks up with an "awful" left-wing photographer who persuades her to abort their child.) Credible enough characters and plausible enough incidents fill the canvases, but they are too lightly sketched in. Teresa Waugh is at her best when she focuses on significant minutiae, like a middle-class dinner-party menu of 1960 that includes "Nescafé served in the drawing room". Also nicely observed is a youngish but greying adman, vintage 1973, who sports "tight jeans and dark red espadrilles . . . a pink and white striped shirt unbuttoned to half way down his chest and knotted around his neck in a red and purple Indian silk scarf".

Too often, however, *Painting Water* reads less like a finished novel than a promising draft: the language is over-simple, unadorned; glimmers of satire wit beg for further development. It is not enough to say that the clerical master (at a girls' school function) made a dirty joke, we want to know what it was; the various backgrounds wait to be filled in. A split second's comparison with the sharpest, most finished work in this genre (Barbara Pym's superb account of the totally humdrum, or Elizabeth Taylor's ironic depiction of Home Counties' domesticity, for instance) places *Painting Water* accurately; like the elder cup served in the second chapter, it is a pleasing enough mixture, but languorous and too mild in flavour.

Life after Harry

Linda Taylor

PATRICIA WENDORF
Leo Days
165pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.
024111534X

When Ruth's husband, Harry Flemming, leaves her, she tries to recollect what she calls the Leo Days - "the lazy days of hot, bright sunlight". It's a displacement activity and she is good at it; her marriage has been a dull disaster. Similarly, in the last few years, middle-class Ruth has been occupied as a volunteer in an inner city organization called Mainstay, which attempts to sort out social problems.

The time is 1980-81; the city, it is implied, Liverpool; the area where Mainstay operates, and where Ruth decides to live, the racially various (and tense) St Joseph's. The district's problems are the stuff of social workers' reports: thieving, drink, prostitution, suicide, wife-battering, squatting, Paki-bashing, old age. With the departure of Harry, and the family business in the hands of the receiver, Ruth's cocooned life crumbles (though she does have a small snuffly).

She finds her own difficulties paralleling those of the residents of St Joseph's. Handsome, boring, hypochondriac Harry is rapidly supplanted by angular, brusque, tough Detective Sergeant McInnes. At forty, Ruth learns how to fight - also that aggression can be exciting, that being a fallen woman (she conceives McInnes's child and refuses to marry him) has the compensations, as well as the drawbacks, of risky, solitary survival.

Realism rules in Patricia Wendorf's second novel; the structure is simple: five parts, five seasons. There's the discontent of Winter, the

energy of Spring, the lust of Summer, the estrangement of Autumn and another Winter, and Leo Days with baby. The narrative is pegged to the juxtaposition of Ruth's and her clients' problems. She recognizes the power of authority (the power that she has as a Mainstay lady), for example, during an interview with her bank manager and when questioned by McInnes's boys after the ignominious death of the gypsy prostitute, Delle Smith.

Wendorf is at her best with detail and atmosphere: the empty spaces left in the Flemmings' house by Harry's reclaimed possessions, the simplicity of Ruth's decorations in her two-up, two-down St Joseph's cottage - "against which she might hang her new freedom". When it comes to character, however, she is less convincing. Ruth's gawky middle-classness works to an extent, but the people of St Joseph's, with their vaguely vernacular talk, their stereotyped problems, lack definition. They are folksy rather than real.

While Wendorf can evoke a climate of feeling, her dialogue, too often, is flat. When McInnes and Ruth have their final confrontation, for instance, "the skin around his lips and nose had whitened, and she moved rapidly to place the width of the table between them"; the tension is felt. But then they talk, and the scene's resonance is lost with Ruth making statements like this: "Running away will solve nothing. We should still be the same two people. There's work to be done. We are needed, McInnes" - and with McInnes feebly replying, "So what in hell do you want? . . . I've been beating my brains out lately, wondering how I can please you." Wendorf's characters habitually make these kinds of wooden speeches to each other; and, in a novel so concerned with realism, that is a considerable failing.

Ruffles and truffles

Lindsay Duguid

M. F. K. FISHER
Not Now But Now
264pp. Chatto and Windus. £8.95 (paperback, £3.95).
0701127643

M. F. K. Fisher, who has for many years contributed a highly-regarded cookery column to the *New York Times*, specializes in that self-consciously ornate prose style which has often found a place in the pages of the *New Yorker*. Her first novel, originally published in 1947, is very much the sort of concoction you might expect from the author of *Consider the Oyster* and *The Gastronomical Me*.

The novel describes the time-travel of a vindictive and slutish heroine, Jennie, who is distinguished by her liking for trains and her irresistible attraction for both men and women. Not much else distinguishes her - If you discount the proud high breasts and the tiny slippers - or does she appear to change much with her surroundings as we meet her in "present-day" California, Switzerland in 1938, London in 1847, Chicago in 1927 and San Francisco in 1882. She enslaves variously an old man, a young man, a middle-aged woman and a young girl and in each case, having ruined someone's life, she flits mysteriously away, leaving the tedious admirers behind: "She breathed carefully, like a woman who has nearly died, and the fine familiar scorn of all the world flowed with nourishment and comfort through her once again, and the old excitement. She was Jennie. She was free out of the pool of words. She would be gone."

The author's carelessness about the laws of relativity, betokened by the rows of dots which end the chapters, is in direct contrast to her concern over the finer points of household appointments, soft furnishings, clothes, food and wine: "Dinner was delightful. There were long white filets of a local sole. There were grilled truffles from Sir Harry's farm in southern France", and so on until the bowl of hot-house strawberries. Even in the least *New Yorkerish* section - describing Jennie's adventures below stairs in a Victorian household - the detail is devoted to *mousseline de sole* underwear and a *cachemire* of pale green organza.

dy with long full sleeves embroidered in silver roses and the three capelike sloping ruffles that fell over her shoulders as kissing as if they had been sewn only for her". Fisher's liking for ruffles and truffles, her fondness for the rococo image and her urge to pile on the scusous description lead her inexorably towards some unintentionally comic moments: "young Paul felt stroog and sure to have Jennie lean over him and let her breasts send out a little puff, a delicate gas, of her private smell. Each drank at her fountain, sucked from her what she could give."

A rather trashy confection, *Not Now But Now* comes with an afterword in which the author explains "The reason I wrote this book is that two men I dearly loved told me to." No mystery about that. What remains mysterious is why Chatto and Windus should be republishing it.

LAWRENCE BLOCK
Eight Million Ways to Die
319pp. Hale. £8.95.
070909283

Ex-policeman Matthew Scudder is hired by a black pimp with a taste for African art to find out who is killing off his girls. An alcoholic who's trying to reform, Scudder trawls the nastier parts of New York for evidence between AA meetings. A violent, gritty, street-wise novel with a good plot, given extra depth by Scudder's struggle with the demon drink.

JACK SCOTT
All The Pretty People
198pp. Collins. £6.75.
0002310171

A man's body is found in a wood just outside the village of Hutton Fellows; Detective Inspector Roshier, that gorilla-like old-fashioned copper with his black hat and brown teeth, barges his way unobtrusively through village society, confounds some bright young people who think themselves far too clever to be caught, and yet again comes up smelling of something not too far removed from roses. Roshier's elephantine tread is as amusing as ever, and the whole is ingeniously planned and executed.

T. J. Blayton

By hulk to Palestine

A. J. Sherman

WILLIAM R. PERL
Operation Action: Rescue from the Holocaust
442pp. New York: Ungar. \$16.95. (paperback, \$9.95).
0804417253

Intensely partisan, often bitter, this personal account of the author's role in the migration of Jewish refugees to Palestine in the years 1938-42 is a revised and expanded edition of his *The Four Front War* (1979). It records a dramatic story of relentless pressure from the Nazis, a silent war with British intelligence agents, clandestine negotiations in a shadowy Balkan underworld of shipping brokers, corrupt officials, and dubious maritime crews, all conducted under siege by orders of desperate people whose frantic escape efforts intensified as "the ran out. It is a narrative of ultimate failure: despite ingenuity, ruse and counter-ruse, adroit escapes, desperate bravery and appalling suffering, only a fortunate few, mere thousands from among millions of Jews who faced doom on a sealed continent, found refuge in Palestine or elsewhere."

William R. Perl's memoir begins in Vienna after the *Anschluss* and the subsequent establishment - under an ambitious junior officer, Adolf Eichmann - of the Gestapo's Central Office for Jewish Emigration, which turned with increasing urgency to Perl's organization for assistance in effecting Jews more rapidly from the expanded Reich. That organization was the emigration bureau of the New Zionist

Organization, the Revisionists; their militant and well-disciplined youth cadres, trained for agriculture in a future Jewish state they envisaged on both banks of the Jordan, acknowledged only the leadership of Vladimir (Zeev) Jabotinsky, and were as contemptuous of the Jewish establishment in Europe as they were of the British authorities in Palestine or in London. Perl himself is espcie of a chilling reference to Danzig Jews as "older, undisciplined people with no ideological background. They were just refugees running for their lives".

The Revisionists, driven by a sense of urgency initially not shared by other Jewish groups, end unencumbered by the political and diplomatic obligations that dictated caution to official Jewish leadership, set out to organize mass transports of Jews bound for Palestine, not just from the Reich but from Poland, Romania and Hungary too; all these countries were as eager to dispose of their "surplus" Jewish population as was Germany. In this enterprise, the Revisionists were bound to collide with the British Government, which in May 1939 had issued a White Paper severely limiting Jewish entry to Palestine. The trickle of illegal Jewish immigration that had gone on since 1934 had by then widened to a flood. Despite counter-measures, including intense diplomatic pressures, naval patrols and police arrests, the Government of Palestine found it impossible to staunch the flow. Only the advancing Nazi troops, the sealing of European frontiers, and a shift in German policy from expulsion to extermination finally ended the refugee movement.

The clandestine war within the larger war waged by militant Jewish groups against the

Nazis, the British, the weather and the official Jewish establishment was a grossly unequal struggle. The militants bought decrepit hulks with smuggled funds, supplied them with improbable flags of convenience, and manned them with crews of doubtful competence and sometimes criminal pasts. With the connivance or active assistance of officials, mostly bribed, sealed trains brought Jews from the Reich, Poland, Romania and Hungary to Black Sea and Adriatic ports, where they were loaded, with no regard for health or safety regulations, on board the wretched vessels and launched into the Mediterranean. The refugees then attempted to evade British coastal patrols off Palestine. They bore passports with visas for improbable destinations such as Liberia, China or Panama, and would jettison their papers before the final run on to the beaches, so that it would be impossible to deport them if they were captured.

Perl describes in detail the planning, negotiations, and intrigues which often led to barrowing voyages under conditions one British diplomat described in despatches as "remnants of the slave trade". The experience of individual vessels ranged from almost uneventful landings on deserted parts of the Palestine coast to the horrifying fate of the "Struma", an unseaworthy converted yacht of 240 tons, which after agonizing months of wandering, blew up in the Black Sea with 769 passengers aboard: there was one survivor. Perl lays the blame for this and other tragedies squarely on the hostility of the British authorities; and indeed asserts that the intelligence services, aided by diplomatic representatives, "manoeuvred most actively to have those refugees

JFK 11/11/84

کتابخانه